





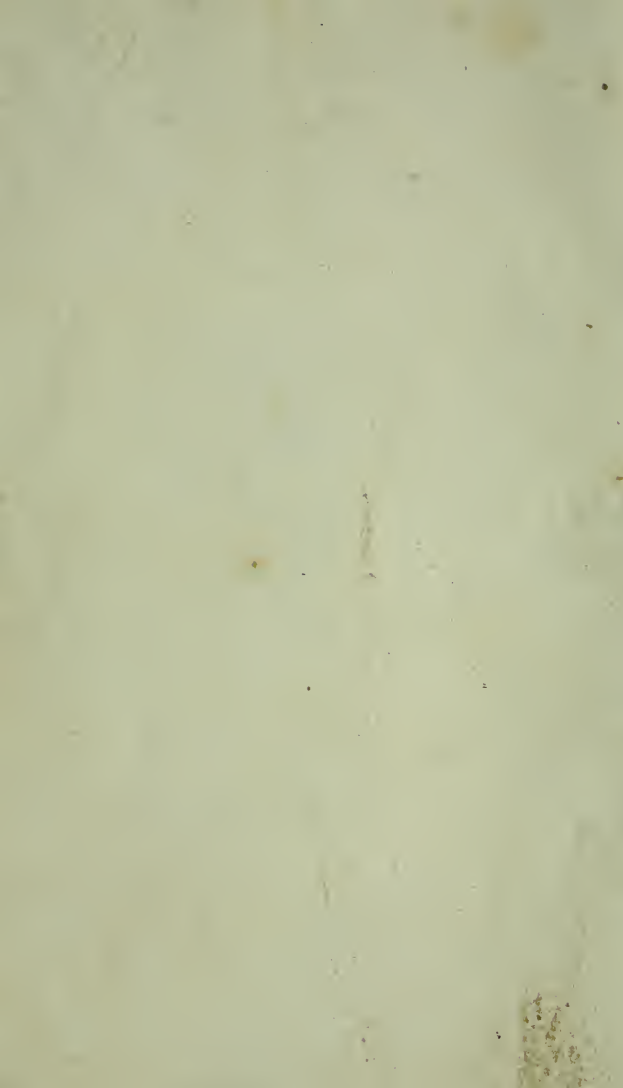
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LEONORA.

VOL. II.

LONDON :
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

LEONORA;
OR,
THE PRESENTATION AT COURT.
BEING
THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF NARRATIVES
CALLED
YOUNG LADIES' TALES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"PRIVATE EDUCATION; "THE POOR GIRL'S HELP;"
"EARLY EDUCATION;" "THE YOUTH'S FRENCH GUIDE;"
ETC. ETC.

"I consider a generous mind as the noblest work of the Creator,
and am persuaded wherever it resides, no real merit can be
wanting."
MELMOTH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR
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LEONORA.

CHAPTER I.

There is seldom any thing uttered in malice, which turns not to the hurt of the speaker. SPECTATOR.

THE day following, Lady Royston ordered her own coach, and with the young ladies made a round of visits to those ladies who had called upon her, on her arrival, and which courtesy she had been prevented, by indisposition, from performing before. Among these the Goldsmiths and Palmerstones were not forgotten. The former received them with all the honest cordiality for which this estimable family were noted; and Miss Palmerstone (for her brother was not at home) behaved with well-bred attention towards them. Her companion, a very elderly lady, entertained the Viscountess, whilst the young lady conducted her youthful visitors over the noble mansion, which was receiving the last finish under the skill and direction of a very eminent artist.

From one of the state-rooms of this old mansion was a very delightful view of the surrounding country, and particularly of the fine ruins of the Earl of Leicester's castle, which forms a principal feature in the romantic village of Kenilworth. Leonora, whose residence was at least a mile and a half distant, painted very well in landscape, and had a refined and elegant taste in all natural and scientific objects, was much struck with the view, and stood in one of the recesses to contemplate it. Miss Palmerstone, with Fanny, moved a little on one side, to examine a whole-length portrait which hung over the huge chimney-piece.

"That, my dear Miss Beresford, is the picture of my grandmother," said the Baronet's sister. "It was taken on the day she was married, and on her seventeenth anniversary. Do you know," said she, looking round, "I think there is something of your look in this picture."

Fanny smiled. "Really I never should have fancied myself at all like that lady, for she is interesting and beautiful."

"But one may be interesting without being exactly beautiful," said Miss Palmerstone; and, in a lower tone, she added, "Did you see my brother this morning?"

“ I did see Sir Alfred,” answered Fanny, “ for a short time.”

“ My brother,” said Miss Palmerstone, softly, “ is seeking for a wife, and in her I am anxiously seeking for his friend and mine. That lady you see was mistress here : she was a kind mistress, an affectionate wife, a tender mother, a generous neighbour, a liberal patron, and a faithful friend. I want such another lady amongst us, and methinks I see her likeness at my side.”

Miss Beresford blushed as her young friend thus spoke. For a minute she was too confused to offer any reply ; but at length she hastily said, “ You are very kind, my dear Miss Palmerstone, and, believe me, I feel most grateful for your good opinion ; but there are attractions which a man must be heartless indeed not to feel, and such loveliness and grace are better fitted to adorn a mansion like this.”

“ I understand you,” interrupted Miss Palmerstone, aloud ; for Leonora had turned from the window, to look at the painting, opposite to which the young ladies stood ; and she now offered some remark, which was replied to in a general way. The young people then returned to the saloon ; and very soon afterwards Lady Royston called

for her coach, and with her young friends returned home.

“ So, Helen, you have had visitors from Clive Park,” said Sir Alfred, when he met his sister in the drawing-room, before dinner.

“ How did you know that ? ” asked she.

“ Because,” returned the Baronet, “ I met the carriage, and stopped it to pay my respects to my Lady Royston. The young ladies were with her. Did she not look charmingly this morning ? ”

“ Who ? ” enquired Miss Palmerstone.

“ Why, the niece ; you know very well whom I mean,” replied Sir Alfred. “ Now own it, Helen, that she is a lovely girl.”

“ I own it,” replied Miss Palmerstone.

“ And graceful, modest, elegant, and innocent,” continued he.

“ All is granted,” said the sister.

“ And that she would make a good and exemplary wife,” added he.

“ Yes ; I think that too,” said the young lady, fixing her large black eyes on her brother.

“ Why, then, Helen,” said he, embracing her heartily, “ you are a good girl ; and now confess you wanted to tease me the other night, by raising so many doubts before me.”

“ Stop, stop, brother,” answered Miss Palmerstone, laughing ; “ first tell me of whom we have been speaking.”

“ Of whom,” replied Sir Alfred, looking at her with astonishment, “ but Miss Clive ? The other young lady,” said he, “ is not a niece of Lady Royston.”

“ But she is the niece of Colonel Clive,” said Miss Palmerstone ; “ and all I have been saying is on her account, not on Miss Clive’s.”

Sir Alfred sat down, and rather peevishly threw a book he held on the table. “ Sister,” said he, after a short pause, “ you surprise me. I have always considered you a noble-minded, generous woman, and superior to all the little prejudices of your sex. Now, in this case, here is a beautiful and lovely girl, who is all modesty and goodness, if one may at all credit one’s senses ; who is as elegant as she is accomplished, and yet you, who really can know nothing against her, will not even hear my praise. I certainly intend to marry, and soon ; but it does not follow, that because I admire this lady, I should immediately declare myself. Why will you not leave the matter to time ? Why seek to lead me from the consideration of her ? If she is too imperfect to make a good wife, leave it to me to discover her

failings. I weigh every word she utters ; and not one can I recollect, — not a look or a motive which can in the least be tortured to her disadvantage or discredit. I tell you again, that in my life I never saw a woman so much to my heart and taste. She is a sweet lovely girl in a public room ; and she is, if possible, ten times more lovely at home, in her pretty garden-bonnet, leaning on the arm of her father.”

“ Brother,” said Miss Palmerstone, mildly, and taking his hand within her own, “ you have spoken to me more harshly than ever I can remember you to have done in your life. But I can feel for you, and, believe me, I forgive it. My dear brother, from our tenderest infancy, since I could lisp your name, have I ceased to doat upon, to respect, to esteem, to look up to you with the most ardent affection ? You were the joy of my heart as a child, the comfort of my life as a youth, and you are the pride of my soul as a man. We lost our father in infancy ; our mother was paralysed from us in youth ; and now, when we have neither uncle, aunt, cousin, nor relation, within many degrees of kindred, can it be doubted that you, my Alfred, are all and every thing to me, and that your happiness and well-being are far dearer to me than my own ? ”

“ I believe you, dearest sister,” interrupted Sir Alfred; “ I never did, nor ever can, doubt your affection.”

“ Well, my brother,” replied Miss Palmerstone, “ the first of my wishes is to see you well married; because a good marriage is the most perfect state of earthly happiness. Marry then, my dear Alfred; but be cautious, be very careful with whom you entrust so precious a deposit as your comfort and peace of mind. All my fears, all my hesitation, proceed from my anxiety lest my brother should bestow his hand, his fortune, his heart, on one who is not fully deserving of so valuable a gift. I wish you to bring a lady to preside at your table who will do the honours with elegance and propriety, and may be able to entertain her guests by her knowledge, and improve them by her taste. But this is not enough. I must see my brother with a tender and affectionate nurse when he is ill; with a steady and disinterested friend; with a ruler of his house who is neither too vain to be led from the path of right by flattery, nor too proud to look over a poorer person than herself, when a superior, or a person whose notice she wishes to gain is present. In short, I should be miserable to see my brother’s wife a selfish, mean-minded woman.

And I declare it to you, upon my word of honour," added Miss Palmerstone, "that nothing but my affection for you makes me uneasy in the prospect of your attaching yourself, seriously, to Miss Clive. She is a beautiful girl; I dare say she is highly accomplished; she dances charmingly; she expresses herself well; and her manners, though not quite formed, are nevertheless easy, and not inelegant. But ——"

Here Miss Palmerstone rested. The old lady, her friend came in, and the butler announced dinner. Sir Alfred sighed, and pressing her hand, kindly said, with a smile, "Ah, Helen, you rogue! you women have always a *but* at the end of every eulogium. However," added he, seriously, "I do not, my dear sister, despise your caution, though I expect, at some future opportunity, a fuller explanation of your reasons. I am convinced of your zeal for my welfare, and it would grieve me to take any important step without your perfect concurrence. Make yourself, therefore, easy, dear Helen."

"Thank you, my dear brother, a thousand times," replied Helen, as she got up to leave the drawing room. "I have not judged from words, they are soon uttered, but from actions. Many little trifles make up something at last, and assist

our opinions as they lean this way or that ; and, at length, comes Judgment with his scales, and determines the value of the person by the weight of the balance. Such a neighbour we then pronounce to be generous or mean, wise or foolish, virtuous or vicious, liberal or selfish, economical or extravagant. My explanation you may command when you please."

" But is not report often a deceitful busy body?" said Sir Arthur.

" Very often," replied Helen ; " for which reason I generally trust to eye-sight alone."

" But even that is not always to be depended upon," replied the Baronet : " actions, which we ourselves view, may be interpreted several different ways."

" That is true, sometimes," said Miss Palmerstone, " for appearances are treacherous, and motives deep hidden. Nevertheless, in some cases, we cannot doubt. A man who should shake his cane in your face, you might be certain would wish to insult you ; and the woman who may profess herself my friend in private to-day, and passes me by in a room full of titled heads to-morrow, I must pronounce to be false. However, I grant there is some truth in all you say ; therefore let us each be cautious ; the one not to

be ready to decide too favourably, the other to pronounce too harshly, without sufficient grounds. Meantime," whispered Miss Palmerstone, "you ought, in justice to yourself and the parties, to seize as many opportunities as possible to further your purpose. We will give a dinner next week; and, if you have no objection, will have a dance the week after. The state room will do as well to dance in, without furniture, as with. The young people will excuse all deficiencies, and the old ones may be accommodated with as many card tables and comforts as they please in this good drawing-room."

"Be it so, sister," said Sir Arthur: "if we see company we must apologise for the tardiness of our upholsterer, and promise better when we return from London in the summer. And now, my dear girl, send out cards, when, and to whom you please. Invite the Goldsmiths, I respect the family. But cannot you leave out that young coxcomb, the Doctor's ward?"

"By no means," answered Miss Palmerstone; "his evidence is necessary, and he must be subpoenaed. Joking apart, brother, he must be asked. He was with the Doctor when you called, and he left his card for you this morning just after you went out. So now to dinner, and I will

despatch the invitations to-night. Remember, you have the choice of two young ladies, and prudence and reason are to direct you. And now a truce to the subject for the present."

"Agreed," replied Sir Alfred; "though as to the power of making either of two young hearts wholly mine, I am not so vain as to feel any certainty whatever."

CHAP. II.

Hopes and disappointments are the lot and entertainments of human life: the one serves to keep us from presumption, the other from despair. ANON.

“**T**HAT Sir Alfred Palmerstone,” said Lady Royston, as she rang the bell for her woman to go up and lay out her dress for dinner; “that Sir Alfred, Leonora, is a very civil, well-bred young man, and he is very good-looking too.”

Leonora, at this instant, dropped her glove: she picked it up, and made no reply; but Fanny by chance looked towards her, and saw a smile, which was quickly chased away by a blush, which overspread her cheek.

The old lady observed nothing of this, and she continued, “Don’t you think, child, it was very pretty of him to turn his horse back on purpose to open the gate for us at the end of the green lane?”

“Yes, ma’am,” answered Leonora, blushing still deeper.

“I think, particularly civil,” said Lady Royston,

as she very precisely stretched out every finger of her long gloves, and, rolling them up, pulled out her gray kid mittens. "And this I know, too, that very few young gentlemen of his age and fashion would think of paying so much respect to an old woman, even though she might have two young ones with her. I want to know more of this Sir Alfred; for it always argues well to see the young, respectful and attentive to the old. Miss Palmerstone, too, I like; she is a handsome sensible young woman: there is no affectation, no nonsense about her: she is easy without being too free, and she is dignified without haughtiness."

"How very crooked she is!" said Leonora.

"Aye, poor thing," returned the Viscountess, "some accident, I dare say; some carelessness in her infancy."

"Yes, madam," replied Fanny; "she told me it was occasioned by a fall from her maid's arms. Her countenance is noble and interesting, and her eyes are brilliant as diamonds: when she speaks she is all animation."

"So she is, Miss Fanny," said Lady Royston, turning round quickly, and looking for a moment earnestly into Miss Beresford's face, as if to see if the praise was sincere. Fanny's artless soul

bore the scrutiny : her countenance retained its modest assurance ; and Lady Royston turned from her pleased and gratified.

This little incident escaped Leonora's observation. Her mind was engaged with the recollection of Sir Alfred, and she longed to bring back the conversation to him. "Miss Palmerstone went through our greenhouse this morning," said she, "and papa is going to lend the plans which Mr. Wyatt, the architect, drew for us."

"So, so ; her brother is going in earnest to make himself a country gentleman," replied Lady Royston, immediately taking up the chain of ideas which she had for a moment lost : "the next thing we shall hear of will be, I suppose, that he wants a wife ; and all the young ladies in the neighbourhood will be setting their caps at him. Pray Colonel," said she, addressing herself to her nephew, who just then entered the room, "pray what do you suppose Sir Alfred Palmerstone's estates to bring him in ?"

"Sir Alfred's yearly income," replied the Colonel, after a moment's thought, as he numbered with his fingers, "I should say amounts to thirty thousand a year ; this is, however, only a random guess. I know his Warwickshire pro-

perty is at least worth ten thousand yearly ; then his mother's fortune, which consists of capital houses in London, was always said to be ten thousand more ; and there is something very handsome in Kent, some thousands a year ; I cannot tell exactly what, but at a moderate computation, he must have five and twenty thousand per annum. Enough to keep a coach and four for every member of his family, though they consisted of a dozen."

" Mr. Thorpe will have above twenty thousand a year in a fortnight, when he comes of age," said Leonora, carelessly.

" Mr. Thorpe ! a puppy !" said Lady Royston. " Pray was not that the young man who handed you to your carriage from the ball-room, and took no notice of any one else ?"

" Yes, aunt," replied Leonora.

" Yes, yes," said the Colonel, " he is not the wisest fellow in the world ; but my friend, the Doctor, was much attached to his father, and he, I dare say, is partial to the son. Yes, yes, poor Thorpe, a well-disposed lad ; giddy, a little giddy, as all lads are."

" Giddy or not," said Lady Royston, rising to go to her chamber, " I should be as sorry, Leonora, to behold you Mrs. Thorpe, as I should be

proud to acknowledge you as Lady Palmerstone ;” and with this she left the room.

“ Lady Palmerstone ! with five and twenty thousand a year at her disposal !” The name and title fell upon Leonora’s ear like dew-drops on a parched flower. She blushed carnation, as Fanny, smiling kindly upon her, said, “ Ah, cousin ! ”

“ Come,” said Leonora, as her eye sparkled, and bosom throbbed, “ let us go up and dress. What nonsense of my aunt ! ”

“ Nay, my dear girl,” replied Fanny, shutting the drawing-room door, and joining Leonora, who waited for her on the stairs, “ Lady Royston talks very good sense ; she would be sorry, she says, to see you the wife of Mr. Thorpe, and indeed, my dear cousin, so should I.”

“ What, then,” asked Miss Clive, “ should you like me to ——, to —— ? ”

“ I know what you mean,” replied Fanny, “ and I do assure you, that if he is the sort of man we all think him, I should heartily rejoice in your happy lot.”

“ Ah, well, it is still nonsense after all,” said Leonora, “ for what is the use of talking of what may never happen : it is very unlikely to be in my choice, is it not ? ” said she hesitatingly.

“ In reply to that, my dear girl,” said Fanny, smiling, “ I must candidly say, that at present it appears a thing neither impossible nor improbable.”

“ Well,” I can’t think what reason you have for saying so,” replied Leonora, laughing; “ however, good-bye, for we shall be too late for dinner if I stay to hear all your curious reasons.”

When Fanny went into her chamber on the previous day, she found the poor afflicted mourner in better spirits than she had hoped for. Mrs. Hammond’s face was as pale as her white dress with weeping ; but she was calm and composed. A sheet of paper lay before her, on which she had been sketching, in pencil, a youth in a naval uniform ; but as soon as she saw Fanny she rose and put it away, as several tears started to her eyes. “ Tell me, my love,” said she, “ where have you been this morning, and who have you seen ? ”

“ Shall I ? ” said Fanny, affectionately.

“ Yes, do, my dear : I like to know your proceedings, and all that interests you. You are all my comfort, my Fanny ; for I have seen no one person besides to-day, excepting the maids.”

Miss Beresford looked surprised ; but she good-naturedly, in a moment, said, “ Do not take it

unkind if my cousins have not been, dear Mrs. Hammond, to see you ; for I know that Bell has been kept under restraint ever since breakfast by Lady Royston, who has given her some needle-work to do ; and Leonora has been much engaged by visitors."

" Ah, my love, they might have found a minute to run to me ; but who were the visitors? "

Fanny then briefly related every circumstance concerning Sir Alfred, and ended by saying, that his attentions were too particular to her cousin to be wholly without meaning. " Were this gentleman," said Fanny, " one of that kind I have sometimes met in company, who appear to utter fine common-place sentences to ladies as mere tasks, or matters of course, I should think nothing of it ; but, I assure you, he is quite a different man. I cannot recollect one partial expression of his to her, and yet any person who observed him would say that he passionately admired her. He listens with such attention and respect to every word she utters ; seems to weigh its worth ; and looks delighted when her remark seems just, or her language particularly elegant. The whole time at the ball he gazed upon no other woman ; he danced with none besides ; he appeared to think of no other being except ——"

“ Except whom ? ” enquired Mrs. Hammond.

“ Except Mr. Thorpe,” said Fanny, “ Dr. Goldsmith’s ward, who seemed also to be much struck with my cousin.”

“ And how behaves Leonora under all this admiration ? ” said Mrs. Hammond.

“ Oh,” answered Fanny, “ she looked so beautiful and so modest, whilst Sir Alfred fixed his eyes with such earnestness upon her in the morning visit, that I do not wonder he was charmed. She is a lovely girl; and I do not wonder at Sir Alfred.”

Fanny was now ready ; and as Mrs. Hammond made no comment upon what she last said, the subject dropped, and the young lady opened the door to go down. Leonora also was going down. Fanny shut the door, and slipped nimbly after her. “ Cousin,” whispered she, “ you have not seen Mrs. Hammond, have you, to-day ? ”

“ Dear, no : I quite forgot it,” said Leonora ; “ but it can’t be helped now.”

“ Suppose you just step to her,” said Fanny ; “ she will take it kind : you need not say you met me.”

Leonora was in so good a humour, that she for once complied ; and running up, tapped at her governess’s room door.

“Come in,” said the lady.

“How do ye do, ma’am?” said Leonora. “I have been very busy, or I should have called in before.”

“So Fanny has just been saying,” replied Mrs. Hammond; “however, I am glad to see you even now. Are you not fatigued, my dear, with your gaiety of last night?”

“Oh, no; not at all,” replied Leonora. “I did not dance a great deal; but it was delightfully pleasant.”

“I am glad you found it so,” returned Mrs. Hammond.

“And my dress,” continued Leonora, “was much admired. I think it was the handsomest in the room.”

“That is saying a good deal,” observed Mrs. Hammond: “our things may be very handsome, without being more so than every body else’s:—however, my dear, do not let me interrupt you.”

“Oh, I declare there is the dinner bell!” cried Leonora, hastily rising. “I must go, or papa will be angry. Good-bye, ma’am.”

“Good-bye,” said Mrs. Hammond, coldly; for she knew that the dinner was sometimes not put on the table for several minutes after the bell

rang ; however, she was too poorly, and out of spirits, to notice this, and Miss Clive left her.

The whole party were at length seated at table. Bell had cried a good deal in the course of the morning ; but as she did not like to show red eyes before the servant, she had washed them in cold water, and now appeared tolerably composed in her usual place. It happened that there was white soup at the bottom of the table, and fine salmon at the top.

“ Soup, my dear ? ” said the Colonel to his youngest daughter, when he had helped every body else.

“ If you please, papa,” replied Bell, in a low voice, glancing at her aunt, who was busily employed.

The Colonel, who was too plain and downright in his ideas and dealings to understand hints, unless they were broad indeed, immediately helped her, and his man moved off, and handed the plate to the young lady. Bell loved white soup ; and she flattered herself she should elude the vigilance of her aunt, and enjoy this. But as she was raising a spoonful to her mouth, Lady Royston called out, “ Bell, what are you doing ? did I not tell you your dinner this morning ? I have taken care to order it, I’ll warrant me. How

durst you think of touching that, when I forbade you?"

"What! has she been ill, ma'am?" enquired the Colonel, looking up in astonishment to his aunt.

"Ill!" replied the lady; "no: but no matter. John, take Miss Bell's plate away."

"Yes, my Lady," replied John, who had been accustomed to pay implicit obedience to his good mistress during thirty years, which he had spent in her service.

Bell's countenance sank into despondence on beholding her favourite soup carried off. The lace round her frock trembled to her inward struggles between mortification and pride. Her eyes were filled with tears; and yet she strained and gulped, and drew them backward, lest the servants should understand she was undergoing penance, and lest her papa should observe something was the matter between her and her aunt. The Colonel might or might not be displeased on hearing the particulars. Bell knew her father thoroughly. He was indolent and passive; and nineteen times out of twenty would not trouble himself to say a word, let the occasion ever so much demand it. But the twentieth time, he might be, and perhaps had been, terribly angry,

and would then admonish so severely, that the girls were frightened and alarmed on a mere supposition of such a correction from their father. Bell, therefore, dreaded any explanation before him ; and she sat as courageously as she could, and silent too ; for she durst not trust her voice, lest the tears should force their way against all restraint. The Colonel, seeing her wait, with, as it appeared to him, an undisturbed aspect, and finding all was quiet round his table, dismissed the whole matter from his thoughts, and ate his dinner as usual ; whilst the heart of Lady Royston relented when she found how patiently her niece submitted. With the removes came in a small dish of poached eggs, and as they were put, by Lady Royston's orders, before her, she kindly said, " Bell, my dear, will you take any vegetables with your eggs ? "

" If you please, ma'am," answered Bell, conscious that these were not a part of the allowance.

" Call for them, child, and help yourself then," said her aunt ; which Bell accordingly did, with no niggardly hand.

The two eggs were soon despatched, and the young lady, who generally ate till she could eat no more, was still hungry. But she said nothing.

“Should you like this leg of a chicken, child?” said Lady Royston, who had been so uncomfortable in the punishment she had inflicted, that she scarcely touched her own dinner.

“If you please, aunt,” said Bell, with a smile, which she could not conceal.

Lady Royston helped her to the leg and the wing, and as the servant handed her the gravy tureen, Bell thought she had never relished any thing so much in her life. At length the whole was finished: she had her allowance of dessert, and her glass of wine; and Bell withdrew with the ladies, almost satisfied that she had had enough.

My young friends, when you are yourselves mothers, be very careful what punishments you inflict upon your children. Never speak when their obstinacy or naughtiness has irritated you; but take a few moments to reflect upon a safe and practicable correction; and when once your lip has pronounced it, let not the eloquence of a host of Tullys, the wealth of India, or the strength of Atlas, tempt or induce you to swerve one hair-breadth from your purpose; because, if you do, your power and authority will be more lessened in the minds of your offspring, than is the value of that object which we have always

prized as gold, and which we suddenly discover to be of brass. An endless train of evils attend upon such weakness, and produce, in after years, consequences which you would shudder to think of. And to mention but one; if your child have never uttered a falsehood, or thought of prevarication till this time, expect him, at all events, to begin now, under your own example. For if you have said, "My child, for such a fault you must be punished in such a way, and thus shall you do;" and if you afterwards say, from your own weariness or sorrow for him, "There, my child, I unsay what I said; you shall not do thus;" what can you suppose, but that he should say and unsay at his pleasure, as you have done before him?

But, perhaps, say you, my young and tender friends, "This child will not love or caress us, if we thus punish?" Thus I reply: "If you do not wish to correct, be silent. But if you threaten, act. And if you begin, go through to the end. Witness, unmoved, penance, storms, tears, contrition, apology, forgiveness. There is no storm, however violent, which does not blow over, and the weather is a thousand times more delightful after it has ceased. The sky is smoothed, the air is purified, the trees are refreshed, and flowers

send forth the most delightful odours. So with a child, after his passion is allowed to spend itself, and contrition rises in him by degrees; he comes forward with higher respect, regard, and veneration, for his judicious monitress: and as, after his penance is happily gone through, he pleads for a kiss of reconciliation, he, of himself, often adds, ‘Thank you, mamma, for making me good!’ So natural is a consciousness of justice, and a love of it in young minds!

On the contrary, if whenever you see a tear, or hear a sigh from the child to whom you have promised correction, you directly set it aside, expect to be teased with a repetition of many such errors, and to be laughed at, in riper years, for your weakness. There is no excuse for such conduct, whilst women are under sixty years of age; and even after that period, practice should have taught them better.

Miss Clive had been in so good a humour with her aunt, that she did not offer the least opposition to her treatment of her sister; and as she wished to have some conversation with her cousin after dinner, the two young ladies went to the library together. Fanny asked Bell to accompany them, but she refused; and they left her to go to the study alone.

Bell threw herself on a chair, and resting her head on the back of it, counted the flies on the ceiling, whilst she turned over the whole dinner adventure, beginning at the origin of her disgrace in the morning. "So, so, as my aunt says," thought Bell. "I see, my Lady is a very good sort of a personage ; she dares not punish me as she threatens, I perceive. I wish I had not mended my frock, for I find I could have got off if I had chosen : I thought, like a simpleton, as I am, that as she was so positive this morning, I should find her as determined as Mrs. Hammond is : but, no, no ; she can say and unsay, I find ; very convenient for me, or else I should be more hungry than I am. I wish I had filled my pocket with filberts. Let me see, if I can conjure up one ; no ; I declare, not one left. Well, I am hungry, and I could eat a biscuit. Come, I'll ring the bell for once : I am sure my aunt would never mind that, if she could feed me upon chicken, on a punishment-day, too. Ha, ha, a punishment-dinner ? why, there is hardly any thing I am fonder of than chicken, except it is, — let me see, — calf's head, hashed ; or mock-turtle soup ; or sweet-breads ; or — well, I will have some biscuits, I am determined."

The young lady, accordingly, rang the bell, which was answered by Mrs. Prudence. "So, Prudence, is that you?" said Miss Bell.

"Yes, ma'am," said the waiting maid: "Clara has got permittance to go into the village to see her friends, and she asked me to answer the study bell."

"Oh, very well, you will do, Prudence," said the young lady. "You must know, I have not had, — that is, I want some biscuits; no, stay, let me see: I have not had dinner enough, Prudence, and ———. Pray, was not a new cheese cut in the servant's hall to-day?"

"Well, I never seen such a one in my life as you are, Miss Bell; why, I declare you know every thing that we have to eat. Yes, ma'am, we had a new cheese, a monsters fine one; it weighed a hundred pounds, and is quite rich; and as like Parmigun cheese, which I used to have in London often and often at my lady's; she had it from a town called Itly, and it was very dear."

"Oh, never mind, with your Parmigun; you mean, I suppose, Parmesan," said Bell; "why, I am sure, Prudence, we have it always at our table, with macaroni."

“ Yes, miss,” said the pert maid ; “ but it may not come from the Genevin town as all my lady had, came from.”

“ I don’t care where it comes from,” said Bell, “ do you fetch me a good piece of this, and bread ; and mind, I will have it toasted ; and bring it in quite hot, and some mustard and pepper, and a sprinkle of salt by the side ; and bring it in here.”

“ And if your aunt should see me, Miss Bell,” said Prudence, sullenly, for she was not very well pleased to be so talked to.

“ Well, and if she should,” said Bell, “ it will be no concern of yours if you only do as you are bid. I shall tell no fibs myself on the subject, nor do I want you to do so, and there’s an end of the matter.”

“ Well, ma’am,” answered Prudence, pertly, “ I must say this, that your sister, who is mistress of the house, does not treat sarvants with alf the simperingsilliousness that you do.”

“ Perhaps not,” said Bell, “ but then you have not the trouble to praise me for my beauty, and to say, ‘ Dear ma’am, ow enchantennly this lace falls ! ’ and ‘ Ow hilligint is that shoe-bow ! ’ and that, you know, is a great consideration ; for I

don't care much about my shoes, nor any thing else either, so that I am tolerably tidy."

Mrs. Prudence looked so provoked at the middle of this speech, which evidently ridiculed her manner and style, that Bell was very near breaking out into a laugh; but she feared to exasperate the maid into a refusal of her request, and, therefore, she restrained herself.

"I fancy, Miss," answered Mrs. Prudence, tartly, "you would not be very well pleased if any body called you ornary, though you insert that you do not at all mind it."

"Why, upon my word, Prudence," said Bell, "I don't believe I should mind that much, for one very simple reason," added she, getting up, and setting her elbows on the mantle-piece to look in the glass: "for this reason; that a large black eye, which I see I have, and a passable nose, with a tolerably clear complexion, and a mouth under six inches in width, cannot be altogether ornary, as you call it. So now I'll thank you for my toasted bread and cheese. You'll not meet my Lady, for she is asleep; at all events, Mrs. Prudence, I'll thank you to be quick."

Prudence durst not refuse, for she had too good a place to risk seriously offending the young ladies; and she was too well acquainted with

Bell's greediness, and accustomed to her positive bluntness, to doubt her applying to some other servant if she did not comply. And as she wished, at all events, to ingratiate herself with her young mistresses, she was always ready and desirous to gratify them as far as lay in her power, and in any manner, however improper. Bell thoroughly understood all this; and although she heartily despised Prudence for her mean obsequiousness, yet she could not resist employing her, at times, on an errand similar to the present. But her flattery she at once rejected; whilst she pitied her sister, whom she saw its dupe. Notwithstanding this, Bell was very fond of chatting with all the domestics in her father's house, and not unfrequently had been missed, and found in the kitchen by Mrs. Hammond. The housekeeper's room, even now, was her favourite and frequent resort when she dared to run away, and was tired of every other place. In this room she seized upon a large old easy chair, and, with her head leaning back, enjoyed a few moments in indolence and absolute idleness. Or she perhaps took the trouble to break the nuts, or to peel the oranges which she desired the housekeeper to give her, and then returned to her family. But with all her faults, Bell had one virtue, and which

she boasted of so little, that it seemed to be innate, and born with her. This was an abhorrence of falsehood. To whatever part of the house she had been, or with whomsoever she had conversed, on being questioned, she openly, and at once, avowed the truth; and this candour, on her part, saved her many and many a reproof from Mrs. Hammond.

“My dear,” would this lady say to her, “I will not punish you because you have told me the truth; but pray, Bell, do be concerned for yourself, and endeavour to conquer your bad habits and propensities, or you will be disgraced as a lady and a female. Such sloth and such gluttony will bring you into disgrace, or an untimely end, if you do not alter. Your good abilities, your memory, your energies, will be all useless, and you will sink into some sad malady, or be disgraced by your friends and connections as soon as you mix among them, be assured, if all these gain ground.”

To all this Bell listened with indifference; and her preceptress, sighing, would reflect how promising a subject had been spoiled for the want of attention and care in early age. “Had that young girl,” thought she, “been corrected for her bad propensities, commended for her virtues,

and been urged to exertion, we should have seen a noble-minded, sensible woman. As it is, alas, she makes a trouble of the smallest duty; and all the enjoyments of her soul are centred in eating. She is neither fitted to be mistress, wife, nor mother. However, I have one hope. I need not yet despair; nor will I, while she despises falsehood. The first point of depravity and real baseness is in the Lie."

CHAP. III.

Agesilaus being asked, "What he thought most proper for boys to learn?" answered, "What they ought to do, when they come to be men." PLUTARCH.

BELL waited impatiently ten minutes, and at length went herself to the kitchen to know the reason that her repast was not ready. Dolly was just going to toast the bread. The cheese was frying before the fire.

"Let me look at my cheese," said Bell: "what a morsel! there is not enough."

"I cut off a whole slice, ma'am," said Mrs. Save, "but it wastes in the doing."

"Well, I must have a bit more, for I have taken a fancy to a good treat of toasted cheese; so pray cut off another slice, Mrs. Save; and do you toast it, Dolly, whilst I do the bread."

This was accordingly done. The kitchen maid, who was a Welsh girl, thought it was the largest rabbit she had ever seen in her life, and yet her young lady hardly seemed satisfied. She, how-

ever, seasoned it with mustard, salt, and pepper, and lifted up the plate to carry it away.

“ Shall I carry it for you, Miss ? ”

“ No, I can take it myself,” answered Bell ; “ but give me another plate to put over the top, to keep my cheese hot. Toasted cheese and roast hare are cold directly.”

The woman, staring at her lady, gave her a plate from the hot closet, with which, and the bread and cheese, Bell walked away.

“ Now I shall enjoy myself,” said she ; “ I shall have nobody to say, ‘ Pray, my dear, don’t eat so fast ; and pray chew your food ; pray sit straight ; and pray don’t drink with your mouth full ; or do not hold your fork half-way down ; or put the spoon so far into your throat.’ No, I will sit as I please, and eat as I please, and do as I please, for once.” Thereupon she drew the cheese to pieces with her left hand, and cut the bread with a penknife, for she had forgotten a knife and fork, and feared to wait, lest her cheese might get cold. Bell thought she had never tasted any thing so good, and she ate most voraciously, till the cheese, and nearly all the bread, had disappeared. She began then to think she really could eat no more, and was wiping

the penknife with a bit of paper, when her sister and cousin came suddenly in.

“What a scent of cheese!” cried Leonora. “Bell, what are you eating?”

“Why,” answered her sister, “my aunt did not give me enough at dinner to day, and ——”

“And very right too,” interrupted Leonora. “You naughty girl, I never saw any one so greedy as you are.”

“Really!” retorted Bell. “Now look here, Leonora, I will tell you something. I saw you were displeased with my aunt at breakfast, and you took my part. I saw you were the reverse with her at dinner, and so now the reverse with me. Your most obedient, Leonora; now when you, for example, have any dismal complaints to make me, I shall decide perhaps in the same way.”

“You are a foolish girl,” replied Leonora, a little piqued.

“That may be; I never deny it,” said Bell; “but at any rate you ought to be wiser, for you have studied more in one week than I have in my whole life.”

“Come, come, Bell, my dear, now let me speak to you,” said Fanny, kindly going up, and

sitting down by her. "Do you know, my dear, it is unkind and wrong in you to talk thus to your sister? Consider by how much she is your elder, and listen to her advice."

"Well," said Bell, "I do not wish to be pert to her, only Leonora provokes me."

"But permit me to say, my dear, that you should not allow yourself to be provoked: although it may not be pleasing to be told of our faults, yet we should consider that it is from a kind motive, and we should listen with attention and even feel obliged; for strangers, my dear Bell, notice our faults to all but ourselves; and one of the duties and proofs of friendship, is the hiding our faults from others, and pointing them out only to us, which is a conduct exactly the reverse."

"Well, I understand all that," said Bell; "and I know what you say is sense, and I do listen to you, because you talk in the same prosing, tiresome way always. You are not wise by fits."

"Come, Bell, that is very rude," said Leonora, "both to Fanny and to me. Pray what have you been eating?"

"Why, bread and cheese; toasted cheese," answered her sister.

"You are a sad greedy girl, and I wish you

may not have eaten too much," said Leonora, as she left the room.

"Now, my dear," continued Fanny, "tell me, if I talk to you always in the same dull, tiresome manner, and you are better disposed to hear me on that account, why do you not feel more ready than you seem to be, when Mrs. Hammond addresses you? She is more equable and steady than I am, and expresses her sense, as you term advice, in a much more insinuating manner than I can assume; and she has, besides, experience for all she argues upon. She is certain of what effects will arise from such and such conduct, from having beheld them with her own eyes. I can only suppose, and give my sentiments from a conviction of their justice in the truth of those who have taught me. What they teach I believe, and what I believe I assert. Tell me now, and pardon me, cousin; rely upon it, I will never betray your confidence."

"Dear! what a long speech!" cried Bell, yawning. "I can't answer it half; however, I take it kind of you, Fanny. Let me see, what did you ask me? Why I do not attend to Hammond's sermons? Oh, dear! why really I do not know. She is, I believe, a good, squinting, careful, prosing, sensible, plaguing young old soul; and,

I believe, I should like her, and love her, as a monkey loves a bear, if she did not want me to learn. Oh, it is so tiresome to learn how to spell, and to write, and read, and French, and rubbish of that sort. I hate French and France, and I would not go to France for the world."

Fanny was shocked, and remained silent at this disrespectful mention of her preceptress. She got up quietly, and was going away, when Bell called out, "Fanny, I say, come back, come back; I suppose you are affronted."

"Nay, my dear, not affronted," replied Fanny.

"Well, vexed then," said Bell; "so I suppose I must ask pardon; so please to forgive me, and then there will be an end of this."

Fanny kissed her: "I forgive you, my dear Bell, all you say of myself."

"But, no doubt, you will not do so for what I said of Mrs. Hammond," retorted Bell.

"At this particular time, I own, it does look unkind," said Fanny, with her eyes full of tears.

"Well, then," replied Bell, after pausing a moment, "I suppose you set me down for a hard-hearted vixen."

"No, my dear, not that," said Fanny.

"Well, whatever I am," answered Bell, yawn-

ing, "so I must remain; it is too much trouble to alter."

"If you would only be resolved, we should soon see how easily it might be done," said Fanny.

Bell on this laughed and shook her head, and her cousin left her.

That evening Miss Beresford had the gratification of taking up a kind message from Lady Royston to Mrs. Hammond, and a respectful and grateful answer was sent back, which Fanny was careful to deliver in her best manner, and which she rejoiced to perceive made a very favourable impression on the Viscountess, with whom she herself was daily gaining ground: for though this young woman, from the most generous of motives, kept back, and always endeavoured to set off her cousin, yet she could not conquer her own amiable readiness to oblige, and solicitude for all around, without putting off the very habitudes and inclinations of her nature. They would and did break forth, although she held them so much under control; and as truth will bear down all before it, so the animation, the ease, the alacrity, the modesty, the benevolence, the cheerfulness, with which every kind word was uttered, and every

obliging act was performed, made a way into every bosom, and stamped a full conviction of her sincerity, if it did not create regard among those who had little regard to bestow. But with such a person as Lady Royston, who was of a sincere, frank, grateful, and sensible disposition, Fanny's merit was not lost: she esteemed her highly; and the more so, perhaps, because at first she had felt a little prejudiced against her, and generously wished to make amends for her injustice. Thus do we often love most ardently that which we remember to have at first unjustly disliked.

“If I can but excite some interest between these two worthy women,” thought Miss Beresford, “each will soon find out the other's worth, and esteem will surely follow.” And how did this sweet girl strive to accomplish this? Not by long fulsome praises, but by a little kind word, or commendation, dropped at the moment most favourable. If she saw it was well received, she went a step further, and rejoiced when she observed a favourable impression. It is wonderful what a few kind words, dropped at the right moment, will effect in a mind not ill-disposed. A thousand good deeds would be done, a thou-

sand valuable friendships would be formed, a thousand persons of merit would be benefitted, and ten thousand hearts would dance for joy, were a hint on a deserving friend well introduced, and his merits delicately touched on. Many a man of fortune and consequence desires no better than to assist pining merit, and to draw it into notice; many a man of merit pines in obscurity, and is lost, for want of a patron.

CHAP. IV.

Fine sense, and exalted sense, are not half so useful as common sense.

SWIFT.

As the family at Clive Park were, a day or two after, sitting down to tea, the servant brought in two cards, one directed to the Viscountess, one to Miss Clive. Leonora's quick eye, ran hers over in a moment. "Sir Alfred Palmerstone requests the honour of Colonel and Miss Clive and Miss Beresford's company at dinner on Saturday, the 10th March."

"The man waits for an answer, ma'am," said the Colonel's servant.

"Does he?" replied Leonora, endeavouring to hide her satisfaction: "papa, what shall I say?"

"What does your Ladyship think?" asked the Colonel.

"It shall be as you please: I will first read over the invitation," answered the Viscountess. "Bell, bring me that taper, the lamps burn so dim, one can see nothing."

“Shall I read it, ma’am?” said Leonora, springing like a sylph from her chair.

“No; I will read it myself,” answered the lady, slowly drawing her spectacle case from her pocket. She unlocked it, but no glasses were there. Dear, dear, where have I put my spectacles? I cannot read this till they are found.”

Leonora, out of patience, whispered to Fanny, “How tiresome she is!” and then moved quickly round the room, lifting up every book, and turning out the contents of every work-bag and basket. At length, when she was almost in despair, Lady Royston called out, “I declare they are in my pocket! the snap of the case could not have been fastened, or I must have forgot myself, and dropped them in. Well, how dim they are? Do lend me something to polish them, child.”

Fanny had been hemming a thin muslin handkerchief before tea, and she immediately offered it.

“No, my dear, not any thing with cotton in it; the down comes off, and leaves a fine dust upon glass.”

Leonora, much provoked, offered a piece of new lawn. “There is no cotton in that, ma’am.”

“That will not do, either,” said Lady Royston, good-naturedly ; “for it is stiff, and would scratch the crystal. You must know, my dears, I was told by an elderly gentleman, who had long been in the habit of wearing spectacles, that nothing is so proper to clean them as soft leather, — wash-leather. Almost every other substance injures the fine polish of the crystal, or else leaves a down or dust upon it. Can any of you lend me a soft glove ? ”

“Enough to drive one mad !” whispered Leonora to her cousin, so unguardedly that Fanny’s cheek turned pale through fear of her being overheard. The two young ladies pulled off their gloves, and offered both at the same moment. As for Bell, she never troubled herself to wear them in the house, unless she was forced to do so ; she accordingly sat by, very little interested in the matter.

“Too stiff, both, and hard,” said the Viscountess : “wash-leather is best.”

“Would not the inside of this glove do, ma’am ?” enquired Leonora, very peevishly ; “I am sure it is not hard.”

“Look here, child,” said the Viscountess, putting the spectacles very calmly on the table, and eyeing Leonora very earnestly ; “when you

are my age, if you should live so long, you will fancy, as I now do, that you are then almost as wise as a girl of eighteen, and can judge as well as she, whether a bit of leather be soft or hard."

Miss Clive was going to give a haughty reply ; but fearing a refusal to the invitation, she remained silent. In the mean time, Fanny had stolen out of the drawing-room, and now returned with a new wash-leather glove, which she put very gently into her cousin's hand, and then sat down.

" Is this the sort of leather you wish, ma'am?" said Leonora, producing the glove.

" Why, you, Leonora, who pretend to know so much better than I, ought to see that it is the proper thing. So now, Bell, give me the taper. ' Saturday, the 10th, a small party.' Why, it is not to dinner, Leonora, but to an evening party."

" That is very odd, indeed," said Miss Clive; " perhaps there is some mistake."

" Go and ask the servant if he has another card for us : there is some mistake," said the Colonel to the man who had been waiting.

The man went, and presently returned with several cards. " Sir Alfred's servant cannot read, ma'am, and has sent all the invitations in for you to see."

“ I declare here are two more for us,” said Leonora, pouncing eagerly upon them. “ One for the evening, to us ; and one, aunt, to dinner, for you.”

“ Well, if I am able, I will attend both,” said Lady Royston : “ I like the family. Bell, give me my morocco case ; or, stay, take out two of my engraved cards ; I will fill them up.”

Bell moved in her indolent manner to do as she was desired ; but in her way she tumbled over the ottoman cushion.

“ Bless me, child, how careless ! ” cried Lady Royston.

The young girl arrived at the table, took up the case, and holding it in one hand, knocked it against a small china vase, full of flowers, which stood near. In trying to save that, she dropped the letter-case, and upset a silver inkstand, and all went to the ground with a great crash at the same instant. Fortunately the drugget was spread over the new Brussels carpet, so that but little damage was done to that ; but every letter and sheet of paper, every card and memorandum, was emptied from the letter-case, and all plentifully sprinkled with ink. The china flower-pot was broken into a dozen pieces, and

the water ran down in a fine current from under the flowers.

“What now?” exclaimed Lady Royston, starting from her chair, and followed by the young ladies. “What mischief now are you engaged in? Do give me a candle. Upon my word, Bell, you are, without exception, the awkwardest girl I ever saw. What business had you to—well, really, if she has not upset the flower-pot, and spilt the ink upon all my papers! And I do actually believe she has spoiled the new carpet. Do, James, send in the housemaid directly; and there, take back the rest of the invitations to Sir Alfred’s man, and say we will send answers to-morrow morning.”

Leonora now turned fiercely upon her sister, and said, “It is always so, Bell; you are the most indolent girl in the world, and you set about every thing with such carelessness, that you are always committing some blunder or other. Mrs. Hammond is continually telling you of this very fault.”

Bell, in a sad fright, stood crying, whilst her sister thus spoke; for she dreaded a reproof from her papa, as well as from her aunt; but the Colonel no sooner heard the uproar, than he

lighted his own study-candle, and left the ladies to manage as they might.

“ I could not help it, sister,” sobbed Bell. “ I am sure, aunt, I did not do it on purpose.”

“ You are a very tiresome girl,” replied Leonora, quite provoked at the delay in the answers, “ and are always in some mischief.”

“ Come, come, Leonora, that is not sisterly : however sorry you may be for the loss of your cousin’s pretty flower-jar, for the spoiling of my letter-case, or the damage done to your papa’s carpet, yet you should not be so severe with Bell,” said Lady Royston, in the goodness of her heart. “ I dare say, Bell, you are sorry, and so do, pray, my dear, learn to be more careful in future. Whatever is done indolently will be ill done ; and unless you look about you, before you move things from place to place, you will often be as unfortunate as you are this evening. There, Mrs. Betty, take away the cover entirely. The carpet, I am glad to see, is not touched. So dry up your tears, and come and help me to lay my papers all straight again.”

Fanny was, part of the time, busily employed in gathering up the flowers and broken bits, in sponging up the ink, with which she dyed the rosy tips of her small white fingers, lest it might

go through to the carpet ; for the housemaid did not come immediately that she was ordered. She smiled in such perfect good humour, and whispered so kindly to Bell that it could not be helped, that at length this young lady began to cheer up.

“ But you have so stained your fingers,” said Bell.

“ Never mind,” answered Fanny; “ a little vinegar or lemon juice will set all to rights again ;” and she slipped out of the room to wash them.

“ She is a good preacher, and her practice is good too,” thought Bell. “ If I ever wish to be like any body, it shall be my cousin Fanny.”

On the following morning, the answers were despatched, and Leonora’s heart was set at rest.

“ Well, now, how pleased you look !” said Bell: “ suppose you were not to go.”

“ Not to go ! nonsense ! ” answered her sister. “ I am certain to go.”

“ But suppose something was to hinder you : suppose my aunt were to be ill.”

“ Well, papa could take me,” replied Leonora.

“ Or suppose you were to break your leg ; or, let me see, suppose you were to, — suppose papa were to be ill ; — or ——”

“ Suppose you were to leave off being a greedy

girl, and to grow wise," said Miss Clive, fretfully, to Bell.

"Well, and if I were?" returned she: "I could do so, if I liked."

"Then, why not, Bell?" enquired Fanny.

"Because," said Bell, "it is such a deal of trouble to turn from bad ways to good."

"You have never tried," said Leonora.

"Yes, but I have," answered Bell: "I tried twice in one day, several years ago; but you scolded me both times; and I was determined I would not tease myself any more; and now, I find it is so much trouble to alter, that I cannot try."

"I do entreat your ladyship," said Leonora, with mock gravity, "to name those two feats of yours, and they shall be inserted in an appendix to 'The Virtuous Historie of the most Worthy Faërie Knights Sir Guyon, Sir Arthegall,' or Prince Arthur himself."

"I wish your ears were boxed," said Bell, sullenly, "with your nonsensical names of knights whom nobody ever heard of."

"Nay, Bell, she is only in joke; do not be angry," said Fanny; "I assure you those names are well known to persons who are fond of old-

fashioned poetry. They are to be found in a very entertaining work, called the Faerie Queen, by Spenser.— Now tell us upon what occasion you exerted yourself twice to do right?”

“ Why,” replied Bell, sullenly, “ some years ago, when my mamma was very ill, and I was a little girl, I heard some one say, that people who were truly generous, gave away what they would like to keep ; and did not do it for the sake of being paid back again, but without expecting any return. Therefore I thought I would see how it was to be truly generous ; for I had often given away what I did not want, and thought I had been generous then. So I had a piece of bread and honey, and a peach, given me for my luncheon, and I ran on the lawn to eat it ; and there came a poor woman and little baby, and she looked pale and thin, and asked me, very gently, for a halfpenny ; and when I had waited a bit, I took courage, and gave her my bread and honey, and peach, though it was the first I had had that year. And then I came into the house ; and, to be properly generous, I would not ask for a morsel, and I waited till dinner was ready ; and I was almost sick ; and my sister asked me why I looked so pale, and I said because I had done a

truly generous thing. Then I told her the story, and she burst into a laugh, and said, I was a silly vain girl."

Here Leonora began laughing, and said, "Oh, yes, I remember that wondrous effort of heroism, and I cannot help laughing now in the recollection. Do, pray, let us have the other story."

"No, you shall not hear it," cried Bell, angrily, "for I will not tell any of you. My governess, before Mrs. Hammond, said I should never be good or clever, so she let me eat, and drink, and do, very nearly, what I liked; whilst she made Leonora accomplished; and now it is of no use to try."

"But, indeed, my dear Bell, I do assure you it would be of great use," said Fanny; "and the little action you mentioned was highly praiseworthy."

"I know you do not think so," replied Bell, half crying; "however, I won't mind."

With this she ran out of the study to her own room, where she vented her feelings in a flood of tears. Leonora felt that she was wrong; and, dreading the mild remonstrance of her cousin, she immediately withdrew.

CHAP. V.

It is to affectation the world owes its whole race of coxcombs: nature in her whole drama never drew such a part; she has sometimes made a fool, but a coxcomb is always of a man's own making.

SPECTATOR.

THE following day, Sir Alfred, with his sister, drove up to Colonel Clive's in a very handsome curricule, with two outriders. Leonora was in her dressing-room, from the window of which she had a command of the carriage-road of the park. She caught a glimpse of this handsome equipage, and could not help smiling as she recollected what her aunt had said. She presently adjusted her fine hair, which seldom required paper or tongs to give it the wave of ringlets, and she went trembling down stairs. At the drawing-room door she stopped a moment for confidence, and then went in with a timid grace, which heightened her colour and her charms.

The Lady Royston and Miss Beresford were present, and both had the pleasure to see Leonora acquit herself well. The subjects of

conversation were easy and light, without being frivolous; and Leonora, with rather more confidence, supported her part as a very young lady ought to do, neither maintaining a haughty reserve, nor assuming an unfeminine authority. Sir Alfred, on his departure, bowed to her with an expressive smile, which seemed to say, "Every time I behold you it is with new admiration." Soon after his departure Mr. Thorpe called, and sending in his name, Leonora laughed, and said, "Yes, we are at home." The Viscountess drew up her mittens, and setting her feet upon a small cushion, with a kind of frown, drew herself into a determined posture for quiet examination. The young man presently came into the room, and looking round saw Leonora, and first advanced to her with the self-sufficiency of conceit and vanity. It is saying a great deal of Mr. Thorpe's admiration of Leonora, that on the morning we allude to, he scarcely seemed to know on which most to bestow it—her or himself: perhaps a by-stander would have found it difficult to decide; for his eyes turned from the lovely visage of Miss Clive to his own gold spurs and new boots; from her lily hand to the brilliant ring on his own little finger; from her fine waving

form to the large cambric frill of his shirt, and the setting up of his collar. His conversation was broken and unconnected; but in it were scattered many extravagant compliments to the young lady, who received them with a laugh of unbelief and ridicule, but whose manner sufficiently indicated the satisfaction she experienced. He had been speaking two or three minutes before he thought of any one else in the room; he then recollected himself, and half sliding towards Lady Royston, with a careless "Hope your Ladyship is well," and "Good morning, ma'am," to Miss Beresford, sat down by Leonora, seemingly determined to trouble himself with no one else. Miss Clive saw this marked preference to herself, and neglect of her cousin, a young woman of her own age, and who was allowed by every one to be a pretty, interesting, attractive girl. She every now and then glanced at Fanny, and thought she saw her countenance change, and that she appeared more thoughtful than usual. And in this was Leonora right. Fanny was concerned at the behaviour of a girl she loved, which she had always been taught to consider as incorrect, at any rate frivolous, — and in this case even more than frivolity was

apparent;—it was levity. Sir Alfred Palmerstone's manners had most openly, unequivocally, and delicately, professed his admiration of and growing regard for Leonora; and the manners of the young lady did not seem to disfavour his pretensions. Yet now was a vain, foolish young man received, tolerated, and encouraged; one who made no hesitation in saying nearly all he thought of the woman he professed to admire, and who met with not one repulse. It was unaccountable.

“Miss Fanny, I'll thank you for the newspaper of this morning,” said the Viscountess, with a severe look towards her niece and the young gentleman.

Fanny rose to give it, and when she was taking it to Lady Royston, Mr. Thorpe raised himself from the chair with an idle, “Allow me, Miss Beresford; I really beg pardon;” and he sat down again, and slipping his hand to his waistcoat took out a bit of myrtle and began twirling it in his fingers, every now and then smelling it. Miss Clive recognised her myrtle, and blushed. Fanny, too, saw it, and could not suppress a gentle sigh. The Viscountess, thoroughly disgusted, pretended to be engaged with the paper, but, in reality, thought of nothing but the assurance of the man. Mr. Thorpe looked up, and seeing she was en-

gaged, said, in a whisper loud enough to be heard, to Leonora, winking also to Fanny, "Pray, how long have furbelows and powder been in fashion?"

Leonora looked at her aunt, smiled, and said, "For shame, Mr. Thorpe."

Lady Royston now put down the paper on her knee, took off her spectacles, and holding them in one hand, said, "I believe, young gentleman, I can answer your question. Ruffles and powder are not in fashion, although one or two odd persons, of sixty years and more, like myself, for example, may still wear them. The costume you allude to, and modest deference in young men, went both out of fashion together; and it is as rare to see a lady dressed as I am as it is to behold the virtues I mention in young gentlemen." So saying, Lady Royston waited not for a reply, but put on her spectacles, and resumed her occupation.

Thorpe looked rather confounded at one part of this speech: he hemmed, and stammered; but after waiting a moment, he said, with a bow, "What a lady offers, a gentleman should not refuse: I therefore thank your Ladyship, and accept the compliment. By Jove!" continued he, in a very low tone, to Leonora, "if that aunt of yours, Miss Clive, is not too much for one's nerves:—

how long is she going to stay in this wicked world? — hem — hem” — uttered he immediately, aloud, “ Are you going to Sir Alfred’s next Saturday?”

“ Why, are you to go?” said Miss Clive.

“ I am, madam,” said he, “ and I hope for the felicity of seeing you. By Jove!” added he, “ it is three o’clock; and our old Doctor always dines at that gothic hour. Miss Clive, may angels preserve you! Miss Beresford, good morning; I am your Ladyship’s most humble servant.” So saying, Mr. Thorpe raised the flower to his face, and Leonora, with a blush, rang the bell for him to be attended to the door.

No sooner was he gone than Miss Clive was slipping out of the drawing-room.

“ Leonora, I want you,” said Lady Royston, sternly.

“ I am going into the study, ma’am,” answered Leonora.

“ Don’t tell me where you are going,” said Lady Royston; “ I insist upon it, you come here, for I want to speak to you.

Leonora, pale with anger, shut the door haughtily, and sat down.

“ Leonora,” said the Viscountess, with much displeasure, “ I am truly astonished at your con-

duct. Why, child, one would wonder where you have been brought up. Such levity is unpardonable. There is such a bold familiarity in that young man, that you ought to keep him at the greatest distance, instead of encouraging him as you do."

"Indeed, ma'am," answered Leonora, "I think he is very like other young men; and, I am sure, I do not say any thing to him that is in the least incorrect."

"It is no such thing," retorted Lady Royston, sharply. "How dare you say so? You do give him encouragement; you laugh, and smile, and simper, and look like a fool, to please him; and make as great a simpleton of yourself in listening, as he does in talking."

Leonora was pale with rage and indignation, and she in vain tried to speak. Her aunt judged that she was respectfully listening, and went on:—"And what does it all proceed from? It is only your vanity.—Vanity!—surely you must be the vainest girl in the world to be caught with what such a coxcomb says; and even if he does admire you, and makes an offer to you in earnest, pray what should you think of such a husband as that? A pretty nephew for me, and son for your father, truly. Why, your father would throw him out of

the window, and shut you up for years, sooner than let you marry him."

At this, Leonora's eyes sparkled with rage and scorn, and she said, with a haughty smile, "*My* father, madam!—I believe I know his love for me a little better than you do."

"Don't tell me what you know, you minx," retorted Lady Royston: "how dare you speak to your aunt in that way? I tell you it is a disgrace to you, or to any young woman, rich or poor, to encourage every young man she sees to flatter and talk nonsense to her. What in the world! You smile, and blush, and hesitate, when Sir Alfred Palmerstone is by; and you laugh, and simper, and look like a fool, when that young coxcomb is near you; and so I suppose you are ready to let every one smile upon you, and laugh with you, and offer love to you, and make a simpleton of you, and then he may go and say what a vain, frivolous girl you are, for your pains. Do you think that men do not make remarks among themselves upon this or that young woman's behaviour? And who, do you think, will speak well of you if you do not deserve it? And what man worth marrying will ever marry you, if you are noted for your vanity and levity?"

Leonora, galled to the quick, said, scornfully, "I believe I am no more noted for my vanity or levity than others of my age."

"Then so much the worse for the age," returned Lady Royston. "If all young women flirt, and laugh, and joke without rule or measure with all the young men they see who are willing to laugh at their expense, so much the worse. But it is not so: I am sure Miss Fanny, your cousin, does not so for one; and I do not think Miss Palmerstone is the sort of girl for another; or, from what I can learn, Miss Goldsmith for another. All young women now-a-days certainly do not behave in any such manner. I could name several whom I know who do not; and I repeat, that any sensible, delicate-minded man would be averse from marrying a woman who had flirted with half-a-dozen gentlemen, — and you begin life as if you intended to have that number in a very short time. Aye, aye, you may look vexed, if you please, and 'tis fit you should be: I will not hesitate, I'll promise you, ever to speak my mind: the truth is the truth. I am sure your mother never encouraged, in any way, any gentleman but your father, and him she married. I think I can answer for Lady Beresford, who was more correct than any woman I knew, be-

sides my own niece ; and as for myself, when I was engaged to my Lord, and he fell dangerously ill, I vowed, that if he died I would never marry any man. But as for you, Leonora, you seem to forget, when a man is by who flatters you, that there is any other being on earth besides your two selves, and are quite ready, forsooth, to be as captivated by the next comer."

"In my conduct," said Leonora, proudly, "I see nothing that my papa thinks necessary to complain of; and I do not know who else has any right to interfere; and as for Miss Palmerstone's very great and elegant propriety, I must possess," added she, with a disdainful, forced laugh, "her elegant person, before I can hope to have the other."

"Her person! you vain girl!" replied the Viscountess, angrily: "her person is deformed, but her features are fine, and indicate a noble mind, Leonora, which I begin to fear you do not value or possess. I am sure she is far superior to you in some things, notwithstanding all your boasted good looks, and certainly in her respect for age. But be this as it may, your conduct is not the less inexcusable. You talk of your papa not noticing your conduct: how is he to do so, when he is so seldom with you? Be assured,

however, of this, that however long a parent may be in finding out error in his daughters, that when he does perceive it, he is angry indeed, and his suspicions and alarm are never at rest. Your talking of no one having a right to interfere with you is just as much to your discredit; for a well-disposed person, especially a young one, is ready to hear opinion, and to profit by advice from any one; but a fool or a proud one rejects it from every quarter but that which he is obliged to bear. The merit in receiving it is therefore none, for he would evidently reject it if he could."

"As for that, it may or may not be," said Leonora; "but this I will say, that I shall not attend to what any one says to me but my papa." With this she opened the door, and went out, slamming it after her, leaving the Viscountess trembling with displeasure and disappointment, and Fanny in astonishment and grief.

CHAP. VI.

To err is human : to forgive, divine.

POPE.

FOR several days after this conversation, Lady Royston was more distant with Leonora, and seemed to observe her with more attention than usual. This change did not at all affect the young lady : she maintained a forced civility towards her ; but the eager and respectful attentions she had once shown were entirely vanished. Her aunt appeared to expect an apology for words, which she was willing to believe had dropped unguardedly from her ; but no apology was this young lady disposed to make. Three days, therefore, passed, in which neither one nor the other had any cordial communication ; and, as it appeared to Mrs. Hammond, who now made one at the meals, attired in deep mourning, Leonora lost ground every day in the old lady's affection ; for old people are disposed to be sudden in their late prepossessions, and as sudden

in their withdrawing of regard. Fanny, who concealed nothing from her kind instructress, had related in the most favourable manner the quarrel and its origin ; and her friend, who was quick-sighted, soon found reason to suppose that her relation of it had been too favourable ; for well she understood Miss Clive's character, and began to appreciate the generous frankness of Lady Royston, whom she found blunt, but kind, hasty, but forgiving, the moment any thing like contrition was expressed or apparent.

In the mean time Bell grew indisposed, and could not explain in what way. Her appetite forsook her, and a blackness settled round her eyes, whilst she had a continued oppressive pain in her forehead. Lady Royston was rather uneasy, and advised her nephew to send for the doctor ; but the Colonel, laughing, said, "No, no, my Lady, we do not want the doctor, except for his good company ; Bell shall have a ride every day with me on her pony."

Bell accordingly accompanied her father two days, but on the third, as she was dismounting, with some difficulty, she was seized with a giddy fit, and fell into the Colonel's arms. He carried her into the drawing-room, in which Lady Royston was sitting alone ; and she starting up, cried out,

“ Oh, Bell, my poor child ! For heaven’s sake, Colonel, what is the matter ? ”

“ I cannot tell ; but pray, madam, let us have Dr. Goldsmith sent for directly : go, Robert, run to the village for him.”

“ Stay,” said Lady Royston ; “ let the man go on your daughter’s pony, and take your own horse for the doctor.”

“ You are right, madam,” said Colonel Clive ; “ upon second thoughts, I will ride it myself, and the man shall follow.”

By this time Bell opened her languid eyes, and called out, “ Oh, my head, my head ! ”

“ Heaven grant,” said Lady Royston, “ this poor infant may not have been neglected too long ! ”

The Colonel, at this, struck his hand to his forehead, and starting out, sprung on his fine hunter, and was soon out of sight. In a quarter of an hour, Dr. Goldsmith arrived upon the same animal, the Colonel behind, at a sharp trot, on his daughter’s pony. All the ladies of the family were tendering their services to Bell, when the Doctor entered. One was supporting her head on her bosom, another chafing her temples with vinegar, a third rubbing the palm of her hand, and Mrs. Hammond was fanning her, and holding

a smelling-bottle to her nose, for she had twice fainted.

“Thank God, you are come, Doctor,” said the Viscountess, with the most eager anxiety.

The ladies now made way for the medical man; and all hung with extreme attention upon his countenance. The patient had now a little revived, and was carried to a sofa, near which the physician sat, and began to feel her pulse and forehead, and question the friends around him for what information they might give. This was very unsatisfactory. All knew that she had not been quite well for several days, and that she had lost her appetite; but no one could recollect any reason. Mrs. Hammond, who was at all times particular in noticing the complaints of her pupils, as knowing to how many maladies children are subject, well recollected that she had complained of pains in her stomach several days ago, which she immediately mentioned to Lady Royston, who gave her a little rhubarb, and thought no more upon it. The Doctor now again felt the pulse of the patient, and shook his head. Bell shut her eyes, and cold drops rose upon her forehead.

“Tell me, my dear Miss Bell,” said Dr. Goldsmith, softly, and leaning over her, “are you in pain?”

“ Oh, yes,” groaned Bell.

“ And where, my dear ? ” asked the Doctor, “ that we may try to relieve you.”

Bell shook her head, and laid her hand below her chest.

“ Something has disagreed with her,” said the Doctor. “ What has she eaten lately ? ”

“ The rind of oranges ; — nuts ; — she is fond of both,” said Leonora.

The Doctor again shook his head.

“ Nay, my dear,” said Lady Royston, forgetting all breach between them at this moment, “ Bell has lost her appetite these three days, and has not touched any thing at dessert except a biscuit.”

Bell now opened her eyes ; and making an effort, said, “ Aunt, I will confess that I never have been well since I ate a plate-full of toasted cheese. I can think of nothing else that has hurt me, except that ; for my pain began the day after eating it : but I thought it nothing till to-day, that I am so very ill. Oh, that I had never been so greedy ! ”

“ Toasted cheese ! ” exclaimed Dr. Goldsmith. “ However, my dear Miss Bell, I thank you for your information. It is cause enough, in all reason. And pray, good ladies, have the young lady taken to bed. I will return in half an hour.”

Dr. Goldsmith, like many physicians in small towns, was both apothecary and surgeon. He, therefore, made all the haste he could home; and in the little laboratory on one side of his house soon made up the medicines he judged proper, and immediately despatched them, with a message, that he should be with the young lady again in an hour, being obliged to visit a patient in a very dangerous state. Bell took what was ordered; and for half an hour she was more composed, when Mrs. Hammond, sitting by the bed, questioned her calmly and gently concerning what she had eaten. "I know, my dear," said the lady, "you will tell me the truth; and by your acknowledging every thing, we shall be able to assist the Doctor in determining the nature of your complaint. Bell then related every particular she could think of, and described how much she had eaten, and how she had felt for several days since.

"It is unpardonable of the servants," said the Viscountess, who sat on the other side of the bed; "and if they were mine they should all be discharged. As for that pert woman, Prudence, I would never have her about me, or suffer any child of mine to be dressed or undressed by her. Her language is insufferably bad: she has picked

up some words and expressions from her ladies ; she knows not their meaning ; and she brings them forward in the most absurd manner, and with the most revolting familiarity. For my part, I cannot think why sisters should not undress and dress each other. They might, if they pleased ; and it would be much better for them, than having their ears assailed by such a load of trumpery as Mrs. Prudence thinks proper to produce."

" Indeed, madam, I am fully of your Ladyship's opinion," said Mrs. Hammond : " I consider her a very improper woman to be about the persons of young ladies. I wish I could have prevailed upon Leonora to think as I do."

" Indeed, ma'am," said Miss Clive, who was in the room, " I see no reason to think ill of her ; and as my papa never interferes with my regulation of the women servants, I certainly need not change : indeed we could not do without her."

" So much the more pity," said Lady Royston : " when I was of your age, I and an only sister did every thing for each other ; and though my mother was the daughter of a duke, she taught us to be neat, and nice, and useful ; and that we had arms given us to reach what we wanted,

legs to carry us from our beds to the wardrobe, and eyes to search out our clothes, and to fold them up when done with ; and upon any particular occasion, my mother's maid assisted us."

" I wonder," said Leonora, " what my papa would say if I were to take down a whole bag-full of stockings and night-caps to mend in the drawing-room ?"

" It would be no disgrace to you, if you did," said the Viscountess, with a frown. " However, as stockings and night-caps are not drawing-room work, you might find time for that, as for many other duties of a prudent mistress, before breakfast. In my youth, I was always an early riser ; and I knew the wife of a peer, a very lovely woman, * now, alas ! no more, who rose every day at six, and employed her time so well till ten o'clock, when she and her lord breakfasted, that time never hung heavy on her hands ; nor was any duty of a wife, mother, or mistress, ever neglected. A part of this time she spent in the study of the Holy Scriptures. Then she arranged her papers, and answered a letter of a friend. At eight o'clock she summoned her housekeeper, looked over tradesmen's bills, and

* The late amiable and exemplary Countess of Leven.

ordered dinner. She then sat down to her needle or reading, or cut out work for her children's maids, till within a quarter of an hour before breakfast; and then she rang for her woman, slipped off her dressing-gown, put on her attire for the day, and went down to do the honours of her table. After breakfast, she sat with her children a couple of hours, until they were grown up; and she was then at liberty for visitors or visiting till dinner. I should like to see some of this steady rule in you, Leonora. But, indeed, now-a-days, young women no sooner get freed from the school-room than they think they are to waste their time in frivolity and nonsense, and to care no more for system than if they were creatures entirely changed, and no longer accountable for their time."

All this conversation was uttered so rapidly, that it engaged only a few minutes. Leonora was going to make a sharp reply, when Bell sighed heavily, and every one was attentive only to her.

"How are you, my dear?" said Lady Royston, kindly.

"Oh, my head is beginning to ache worse," replied Bell, and every body was for a minute silent. Surmises and opinions, and guesses and

fears, were all circulated in whispers ; and after Fanny had expressed her great regret that the matter of the toasted cheese never occurred to her, and she and Leonora had added all they knew upon the subject, which, indeed, was little enough, for the repast was ended before the young ladies saw her, they moved away ; one to look for the Doctor, who was expected every moment, and the other to fetch some Hungary water, from the Viscountess's dressing-table.

Bell grew hourly worse, and her disorder soon wore the most alarming appearances. Dr. Goldsmith, with the utmost delicacy, declared to the family his doubts and apprehensions of her recovery ; and for their satisfaction requested that a physician of great eminence in a neighbouring town, and at that time in full practice, might be called in. A man and horse were, therefore, despatched some miles for this gentleman, who in a few hours arrived. He confirmed the danger the young lady was in, and declared that a miracle alone could save her, as the internal inflammation seemed very far advanced. This was a heavy blow to so fond a father as Colonel Clive. He shut himself up in his library, from whence he would not stir, even for meals ; nor could he endure the sight of any one, except-

ing his friend Dr. Goldsmith; whom when he perceived, he hid his face between his hands, dreading to hear the event announced that his daughter was no more.

During this painful scene, Mrs. Hammond stifled all her own private sorrows, to attend, by night and by day, upon her young pupil. Lady Royston spent much of her time in the sick chamber; but her age and infirmities required rest, and she was obliged to submit to the kind suggestions of the amiable preceptress. In all alarming cases of sickness, a medical man requires some one ostensible person, who may herself see to the administering of the medicines, and from whom he may receive reports of the variations of the symptoms. Mrs. Hammond, in this capacity, charmed both the physicians; and particularly Dr. Goldsmith, who found in her observations and notices so much good sense, judgment, and experience, as highly raised his opinion even since his interview with her in Mrs. Green's house at Kenilworth. She was so quiet, so calm, and so punctual in giving the medicines exactly to the time specified; so quick in remarking every change, and so clear in directing the attendants, that Lady Royston, too, was not slow in making her acknowledgments; and thanked her, as one

person thanks another who has obliged him or his family.

Fanny, whose affectionate heart was in a flutter for her preceptress's health as well as her cousin's, did her very utmost for both. She crept into the chamber ; stood in some corner unobserved ; heard this or that was wanted ; or in looking and watching, saw, herself, it was required, and then stole down stairs and brought it up ; put it on the table, or gave it to the person, and then waited till she could move right or left for any one else. Fanny minded not whom the article was for ; she trotted away ; her only desire was to be useful. She never waited for thanks, or wanted any acknowledgment. If Lady Royston wished to read the label of a phial, and felt for her spectacles, Fanny, unasked, slid out of the room, and sought for them below, till she was successful, and then running gently up, laid them by the side of the lady ; or if she was not successful, she came up to the sick room, and said nothing. No one knew she had been down a long flight of steps, through several rooms, moving work and books and work baskets to oblige a person. If a packet of medicine came tied up from the Doctor's, and Fanny, peeping about, saw it, she immediately reflected that

scissors or knife would be necessary to open it. She therefore sought for one or the other, and laid it ready. If the pin-cushion was empty, or the vinaigrette box wanted replenishing, or the lavender water was spent, Fanny immediately perceived and had fresh supplies. And if her dear preceptress could be relieved in any possible way, or saved any unnecessary exertion, by thinking and fetching for her what she might require from her wardrobe, Fanny was all animation and eagerness.

“My dearest child,” said Mrs. Hammond to her several times, “I must not have you run about in this manner : your cheeks are quite wan and pallid.”

“How pale are you, then, my dearest friend !” would Fanny reply. “I wish I could be of any use, and save you.”

“You are of use, my love,” Mrs. Hammond answered. “Your services are quiet and unboasted, yet they are nevertheless services. A soft May shower is not the less beneficial because it is not preceded by the thunder of July. We do not see your cousin tripping down stairs and up again fifty times a day. You must rest yourself, my Fanny. I love your sweet willingness, my dear, and your disinterested readiness to serve

all your fellow-creatures in the hour of need; but it behoves me to see that you do not injure your own health, at a time when you modestly think that you do nothing. And, therefore, I do desire you will sit down in that chair by me, and not stir for half an hour."

Leonora, also, was a great deal in the room with her sister. But Leonora wished, as was always her custom, to show that she was of importance; and if she could not direct, or at least take a leading part in what was going forward, she was dissatisfied.

When Dr. Goldsmith applied to Mrs. Hammond for information, which she alone could give respecting the patient, Miss Clive put herself forward to reply. But the Doctor took no notice of her, and still continued his questions as before; the case was too serious, and the danger increased too rapidly, for him to use any unnecessary ceremony. He ardently wished, and anxiously strained every faculty to save his friend's child; and Mrs. Hammond's clear and ready statement and co-operation greatly assisted his exertions.

Leonora could or would not see his conduct in a just light: she took offence at the Doctor; and once or twice entreated her father to give to

the second gentleman the whole management of her sister; but the Colonel was so much hurt the last time this was proposed, that she was obliged to submit.

“I have the greatest reliance,” said the Colonel, “on both of these gentleman: they have great knowledge, skill, and practice, to recommend them. Dr. J—— will exert himself for his own honour and credit, and Goldsmith for the sake of his friend. And were it not so, they are clever men, and their profession is a noble one. Their feelings shall never be hurt in my house. I know if your poor sister can be saved by human aid she will be, under them.”

Leonora durst not reply, as her father threw his head back in his chair, with eyes full of tears. But she returned to Bell’s chamber, and there, when her feelings of affection returned, and her anxiety for her sister influenced her, she would think herself of very great use. Now and then she would choose to ask when this or that draft was to be given, look at the watch, and go to pour it out, then perceive that the wrong glasses were up stairs, and send two people down to change them. Never did she think of running herself for what might be wanted. Her great object, even in the midst of anxiety, was

still to show her own importance ; and she very often vexed Mrs. Hammond, and teased the patient, by commanding, and ordering, and arranging, when she was disposed to find a necessity for it. Not that in acting thus Leonora was unconscious that she was wrong ; but she could not resist the desire she had to show to every one, that although Dr. Goldsmith communicated only with Mrs. Hammond and her aunt, an old lady who was in the house, yet that she alone was mistress and head of the family. Leonora was, consequently, often unwelcome ; and had her friend been less engaged, or less anxious, at this critical juncture, she would have remonstrated with her on her foolish, and unamiable conduct. But this valuable woman was now lost to every consideration but that of Bell's danger. The physicians had acquainted her in private that they would, that night, try the effect of the most desperate medicine that could be administered in that stage of the disorder ; and if this, they declared, would not work a favourable change, they could go no farther.

“ I, myself,” said the kind-hearted, zealous Dr. Goldsmith, “ I will give the medicine ; and I will stay in the house all night, for a satisfaction to Colonel Clive. It must be given every hour,

and as I shall take my station in this easy-chair till day-light, I do entreat you, my dear madam, to lie down, and snatch a little rest, or you will be seriously ill."

Mrs. Hammond gratefully thanked the Doctor; and having received from him a promise, that he would tap at her door, and call her up, on the appearance of any change, she dismissed every one, excepting Mrs. Save, whose turn it was, to wait in attendance that night; and going to the ante-room, shut the door, threw herself dressed upon a couch, and worn out with three nights' watching, offered up a short prayer, and immediately fell asleep.

Mrs. Save replenished the fire, brushed up the hearth, and put the silver-kettle full of water, by the side, to keep hot. She placed before the Doctor two or three sorts of wine, with biscuits, soda-water, sugar, and lemon; and then, after hemming once or twice, would fain have begun a story, for his edification and her own amusement, as she had little to do with the sufferer, the Doctor taking upon himself to give her the draughts and other medicine. But the good man was, just now, too intent upon his patient's case to heed Mrs. Save. He observed nothing that she did; but rose up from the chair, and

taking his watch, counted time, and walked silently and thoughtfully up and down the carpeted bed-room, sometimes stopping to listen to Bell's murmurings; to mark if her delirium still continued; or he stood by her bed, and reckoned her pulse by the minute hand of his repeater. Mrs. Save, perceiving she was of so little importance, began to yawn; and after a little manœuvring, landed herself in a second very comfortable chair, in an obscure corner of the room; and in groping under the cushion found a few yards of new flannel, in which she wrapped her head and shoulders; and composing herself with all diligence, was very soon in a profound repose.

CHAP. VII.

A benevolent and skilful physician is to the body what the pious and charitable divine is to the soul: each is a blessing bestowed on man, and a peculiar instrument of the providence of God.

YOUNG LADY'S TALE.

MISS CLIVE slept in Mrs. Hammond's room, during her sister's illness; and as she and Fanny were undressing, she could not help saying, after a pause of some minutes, "How unfortunate it is that Bell is ill just now."

"It is, indeed," answered Miss Beresford; "and so very ill, too, that I almost think even Dr. Goldsmith is alarmed, by his choosing to sleep here to-night. Poor Mrs. Hammond will have a little rest, of which I am sure she stands in great need. It is very trying for her, so soon after her severe loss."

"As for that," replied Leonora, "it is her own choice to stay with my sister. I am sure any body else would do just as well; but she is so conceited, and Dr. Goldsmith is so fascinated with her, that it is of no use to say any thing."

“ Surely, cousin, you cannot think Mrs. Hammond conceited ? ” said Fanny, looking with some surprise in her face, to see whether she was in earnest. “ Really I do not think there is any one in the house who could attend so well to your sister. I am sure I should be a very indifferent nurse ; for I am afraid I never could keep my eyes open all night, if I were to try ever so hard ; and I should be frightened at the idea of forgetting some of the medicine ; and I think, cousin, you would be very tired and pale, if you were to sit up and watch for many hours together.”

“ Very well, all that does not signify,” replied Miss Clive : “ I mean it is unfortunate that Bell is ill, because of to-morrow.”

“ Why, what ? — to-morrow ? — oh, I forgot,” said Fanny : “ do you mean because of the party at the Abbey ? ”

“ Of course I do,” said Leonora : “ you always require such a deal of explanation. You know my father made me send excuses this morning ; but if my sister is better, to-morrow, I do not see why one or two of the family, at any rate, might not go. My Lady and one of us, for example.”

“ Well, I declare,” answered Fanny, “ if Bell should be a great deal better, I have no wish to

go out to-morrow, for one. Now you smile, Leonora, as if you thought it all affectation, but I declare I do mean what I say."

"Look here, Fanny," said Miss Clive, smiling, and putting her fore-finger in the palm of her hand; "you do not pretend to deny, Fanny, that it would be a pleasant place to go to? I mean, you cannot deny, that you think Sir Alfred a very handsome man, and quite a man of fashion. Come, what do you answer?" asked she, putting the candle near to her cousin's face.

Miss Beresford's ingenuous countenance was suffused with carnation; yet she said, "I do not certainly deny, what is evident enough, that Sir Alfred is what you assert, and that I like visiting at his sister's; and yet, Leonora, I do repeat, I would rather not go there to-morrow. Somehow, I do not think we should have spirits, just at present, for a party."

"I do not see that at all," replied Leonora, "provided my sister is better: I cannot see why a part of the family should not go."

Fanny to this made no reply; yet she could not help thinking that her cousin made too light of Bell's danger, and that she was also extremely unkind with respect to Mrs. Hammond, whom anxiety and watching had made feverish, and greatly

indisposed. The young ladies, therefore, broke short the conversation, as they generally did, with some dissatisfaction on both sides, and soon stepped into bed. Fanny, who had fatigued herself very much throughout the day, and had been extremely affected by the anxiety of her uncle and friends, lay awake a considerable time, reflecting upon, and dreading and wishing for the morrow's news. Leonora, on the contrary, was asleep a few moments after she buried her head in the pillow.

At four o'clock in the morning Dr. Goldsmith tapped Mrs. Hammond's shoulder : she broke from a very disturbed rest, sprang from the sofa, and with a palpitating bosom asked, " What news ? "

" I hope, favourable," said the Doctor : " she has just spoken rationally, and has asked for something to drink. She is cooler, and I should wish you to go to her. I will stay here : she might be flurried by seeing me at this hour."

" Thank heaven ! " said the lady, and directly went forward.

As the physician had said, she found the patient much cooler, and more composed, but so reduced, and with a voice so weak as hardly to be heard. Mrs. Hammond whispered, and asked her how

she felt herself. "Better," was the reply. She then drank her barley-water, and seemed inclined to dose; which her friend encouraged, by gently closing the curtains, and sat down by her side. In an hour the Doctor came in to see her again: Bell was awake, and put out her hand to shake hands with him. He found the medicines had taken effect; and he again retired to slumber in the ante-room till six; when seeing all go favourably on, he gave Mrs. Hammond a hearty shake by the hand, of congratulation, and walked down stairs to the Colonel, whom he met, just leaving his chamber. "Come, my friend," said he, "I have smuggled myself in your daughter's room this night; for, I will own now, my dear Colonel, I was doubtful of the issue. Her medicines have succeeded. She is no longer delirious; and if she is kept extremely quiet, I think all will be well. I am now running home."

The Colonel's heart was full at this intelligence. He wrung the physician's hand, but said nothing.

"Come, as you are dressed," said Doctor Goldsmith, endeavouring to laugh off the emotion he felt; "pray be so kind as to help me to find my hat: I left it in some room below, I really cannot tell which."

"And do you think," cried the Colonel,

recovering his speech, half-laughing and crying, “do you think, my wórtly friend, you shall walk home at this hour of the morning?”

“Why not?” said the Doctor: “it is a very fine morning.”

“No, no,” said Colonel Clive; “you shall take a dish of coffee with me, and my carriage shall be ready to set you down at your own door, or wherever you wish, directly afterwards; and God bless you, a thousand times, for your good news, for a good fellow as you are. Nay, it will be a charity to give the coach-horses a trot, they are so fat and idle.”

“I dare say, Mr. Coachman will not think it any charity,” answered the Doctor, “to harness the creatures to the chariot for my pleasure;—no, no, I won’t have your carriage, Colonel: I would rather walk a thousand times, as it is a fine day: your coffee I will taste, and welcome it.”

“Then it shall be ready in an instant,” said the Colonel; and he sprang off into the kitchen, to see who of his family were up. He there found the kitchen-maid blowing the fire, and Mrs. Save in the act of yawning over a description of her rheumatic pain in the arm. This good lady started at the apparition of her master in the kitchen. However, she took care to explain

where she had been all night, and ventured to give a history of Miss Bell's amendment, though she only knew so much of the matter as she had gathered from others; for she had slept so soundly in the easy chair, that Mrs. Hammond had no little trouble to awake her, at six o'clock, to go down and make some tea for the young lady. The Colonel ordered coffee, and was leaving the kitchen, when he stepped back and put a guinea into Mrs. Save's hand for her attendance: the coolness, or some other quality of the metal, so fully awakened her, that she stirred nimbly about, sent up breakfast in a quarter of an hour to her master, and despatched some very nice tea for her young mistress.

When Bell had drank her tea, she again shut her eyes, and seemed disposed to sleep. Mrs. Hammond then rang for one of the maids to sit by her bed, whilst she went to her own room, to relieve the anxiety of the young ladies. She there tapped gently at the door, which was immediately unlocked by Fanny, in her dressing gown. Leonora was rubbing her eyes, half awake, and sitting up in bed. Fanny's cheek went pale and red, as she looked earnestly at Mrs. Hammond's countenance, to learn the state of the

patient. For a moment, and but a moment, the lady paused to consider and admire the feeling and tender anxiety depicted in the face of the child of her heart ; but she presently relieved her fears, by saying, “ My news is more than favourable, it is good. Dr. Goldsmith is just gone in high spirits. The medicines have succeeded so far ; and we have now every thing to hope, from her youth and good constitution. On hearing this, Fanny sprang forward, and threw her arms round her preceptress’s neck.

“ Thank God,” said she, several times, as she hid the few tears of joy, which, in spite of every effort, dropped on her bosom.

Mrs. Hammond gently disengaged herself from her, and moving on to the bed on which sat Leonora, said, smiling, “ Come, my dear, there is an end to sleep with such good tidings. I have completely roused you. Surely, my dear Leonora, you will think it wonderful to see the alteration. It seems like a miracle ; like one risen from the dead ; so small a glimmering of hope did Dr. Goldsmith give us last night. She is now placid, and comparatively free from pain ; but, of course, greatly reduced ; and so weak as hardly to have any voice left.”

“ Well, for my part,” answered Leonora, “ I always thought she would get over this attack : I never considered her in danger.”

“ But,” replied Mrs. Hammond, “ Dr. Goldsmith and Dr. J., also pronounced her yesterday in very imminent danger ; and the former has assured me, that she would not have survived this night had the medicines not succeeded. And as it is, she cannot be said to be quite safe yet.”

“ Oh, I do not know how that may be, ma’am,” said Miss Clive ; “ but I know very well, that all doctors make the worst of every thing, for the sake of advancing their own credit. We are not obliged to believe a person is in danger because Dr. Goldsmith, or Dr. Anybody else, chooses to say so.”

“ We are not obliged, I grant you,” returned Mrs. Hammond, coldly ; “ but if we have no respect for the opinion and acknowledged talents of a medical gentleman, I apprehend we have no business to employ him. If he is considered worthy to be consulted, he must be thought deserving of attention. The physicians of this country are a noble minded, liberal class of men, who are an honour to us, and a comfort in the most trying moments of existence. It has been my lot to observe the practice of several in and

out of my own family ; and so far from having the ostentation you imagine, I have always found them modest and delicate in giving decided opinions, and universally careful in sparing the feelings of friends and relations of the patient ; and, surely, too much cannot be said in praise of their liberality. Of this I am certain, that not one of the liberal professions has more disinterested followers than medicine. How many hundreds are advised, and relieved, yearly, by them, without paying one single farthing ! ”

“ Yes, at hospitals,” said Leonora.

“ That was not my meaning,” answered Mrs. Hammond ; “ for the gentlemen who attend at those noble establishments have, I presume, a yearly stipend from the funds of the charity. But privately, in the regular course of practice, our most celebrated physicians often and often refuse their fees from indigent-looking persons, who offer their guinea, a sum which they can but ill spare, and rejoice to find it returned in the most delicate manner.”

“ But,” replied Leonora, “ they take it from the rich regularly enough : my papa gives Dr. J. twenty guineas every time he comes.”

“ Physicians,” replied Mrs. Hammond, “ do receive from the rich, and so it ought to be ; and

God bless them with all the wealth which can accrue from so laborious, so dangerous, and so useful a profession. Dr. J. comes twenty miles to your sister, and has the same distance to return : he loses at least eight hours ; and twenty guineas are but a moderate remuneration for such a loss to a gentleman in full practice. I must, however, again explain what I just now said respecting physicians taking fees of the rich. I myself know several eminent men in London, and elsewhere, who, upon receiving a double fee from persons of the largest fortunes, request them to take back the half, and refuse to have more. This is noble and generous, beyond what I have ever heard of in the other liberal professions ; and I am convinced, that men acting on such principles are not likely to descend, for the paltry considerations of gain, to alarm unnecessarily a whole family. That Bell was in danger I fully believe ; and I shall not believe her recovery certain, until the gentlemen who attend her give me reason for so doing. Neither do I think it becoming in a young lady of no experience, and of eighteen years of age only, to speak in so confident a manner in contradiction to two grave, clever men, who have studied the subject during

a whole life, and of whom each is old enough to be her grandfather."

Mrs. Hammond said all this very quietly ; and then taking some linen from her wardrobe, walked away, leaving Miss Clive with a blush of anger upon her cheek, but silent from having no answer ready ; for she found it difficult to assign any reason for her opposition, and yet could not bear to withdraw it. Alas, how many young ladies in this respect resemble Leonora !

CHAP. VIII.

Passion makes them fools who otherwise are not so ; and shows them to be fools who are so.

NOTWITHSTANDING the patient was so much better on the Saturday, Colonel Clive would neither go nor suffer any of his family to visit at Sir Alfred Palmerstone's. But as Bell continued to amend, though very slowly, it was determined that Lady Royston and her two protégées should go to the little quadrille party on the following Saturday. In the mean time, Leonora had the satisfaction of learning that the young baronet had been unremitting in his enquiries after her sister, which showed he was not a little interested in the family. He had called every day himself to ask after her, during the first part of her illness, and now regularly sent his servant. At length he came, and asked to see the ladies, and was admitted. He was, as usual, respectfully easy towards the Viscountess, polite to Fanny, and flatteringly attentive to Leonora, with

whom he took the liberty to cordially shake hands, as he congratulated her upon the amendment of her sister. He staid pleasantly conversing above an hour, and then took his leave.

No sooner was he gone, than Lady Royston said, "If I were a young woman, I should be better pleased with the good opinion of that young gentleman than of three fourths of the men of fashion in England." *

Leonora blushed, and Fanny turned her head to pick up her thimble, which she had dropped. Then she folded up her work, and went up stairs to her cousin, who was now able to sit up in her easy chair.

* We here presume to caution elderly people, who have very young women under their care and guardianship, against expressing themselves too favourably with regard to any young man whom they know, and who is their equal in birth and fortune. The elderly person considers not the force of her words upon young and tender minds, which are too alive to such opinions in favour of a rich, handsome, or deserving man. The maiden cherishes the words thus casually dropped; and when they are forgotten by the speaker, they are the plea upon which many an attachment is at first sanctioned. When the question afterwards comes of marriage, the same elderly person disapproves, perhaps, and totally forgets that he or she was the actual first promoter of the idea. How many matches are made that never would have been, but for such opinions, thoughtlessly dropped, and forgotten by all but the young and inexperienced!

Leonora looked forward to the approaching Saturday with great impatience. She superintended the making of a very elegant dress, of which she carried a pattern in her head of one of the ladies Greville ; and having tried it several times on, found it suit her to admiration.

Fanny also, under Mrs. Hammond's direction, and with the assistance of honest Mary Kelly, made a white crape frock, and trimmed it with blond. It was elegant and light, and Fanny looked very pretty when she tried it on. But she surveyed herself with more indifference than pretty women usually do in a new and becoming dress ; and Mary Kelly folded it up and laid it in the wardrobe, with much inward surprise that her lady should not testify any delight upon so charming an occasion as that of putting on a handsome new becoming gown.

On the Saturday morning, the ladies had a visit from the enamoured baronet, who expressed his great satisfaction in the expectation of seeing the party that evening, and begged, as a favour, that the Viscountess would not be late : she very good-naturedly promised to be among the first of his visitors.

“ Thank you, dear madam,” said Sir Alfred ;

and as he glanced at the two young ladies who stood at a window, at some distance, he added, "Perhaps, some day, I may be so happy as to possess a better claim to your Ladyship's indulgence than I now can do."

"However that may be," returned Lady Royston with frankness, and at the same time offering her hand, "I can assure you, Sir Alfred Palmerstone's actual merit is not lightly estimated here; and I wish him as well as he can wish himself."

The young gentleman respectfully and gallantly raised the old lady's hand to his lips, and bowed: but he was too deeply affected to make any reply; and again saluting the young ladies, he returned home. Lady Royston's eyes had a tear floating in them: she said not a word, but drawing up her mittens, and putting on a short cloak which hung on her chair, she opened the glass door and took two or three turns on the terrace.

No sooner was she gone, than the two girls raised their eyes upon each other's countenance. Leonora deeply blushed, and Fanny's cheek was much altered to a pallid hue.

"I will fetch," said Fanny, "a piece of bread

for Lady Royston: she is chirping to the birds, and I know she would like something to regale them with." She then got up, and was leaving the room.

"Fanny!" cried Leonora, hesitatingly. Fanny stopped. "I say, cousin," continued Miss Clive.

"Yes, cousin," answered Miss Beresford, pensively.

"Where are you going to?" said Leonora.

"To fetch a bit of bread for the birds," replied Fanny: "Lady Royston always likes to have a piece to crumble for them when she walks."

"Oh, never mind the nasty birds," said Leonora; "do come and sit down."

Fanny returned.

"Fanny," said Leonora, after a pause, "was it not odd of Sir Alfred to whisper to my aunt?"

"Did he whisper?" said Fanny, musing.

"To be sure he did," answered Miss Clive. "What could he have to whisper to my aunt? One would think he was making an offer of his hand to her," continued she, again blushing.

"Ah, Leonora," answered Fanny: "you guess, and I guess."

"Guess what?" rejoined Leonora, blushing deeper.

“My dear girl,” replied Fanny, “you cannot but understand his object. If a proposal was made, you can well understand, and I too, on whose account. Oh, Leonora, may you be happy!” saying this, Fanny flung her arms round her cousin’s neck, and pressed her to her heart.

Leonora was touched, and she kissed her cousin’s cheek, saying, “Oh, Fanny, you are—you must : indeed it is all, I dare say, entirely a mistake.”

Fanny moved towards the door, smiling, and shaking her head. “No, Leonora, I am not mistaken.”

Leonora stole to the glass, and looked in it. “He is a very nice young man,” thought she, as she leaned her elbow on the marble chimney-piece ; “and yet I should not quite like to be married at present, and tied down to house-keeping. I should first, at any rate, like to see something of London, and the fashionable young men there. Who knows but I might make a conquest of some nobleman of higher rank? The young Duke of D—— for example ; whose father and mine used, many years ago, to be so intimate. After all, the wife of a baronet is such a small kind of a ‘my Lady.’ I believe his creation, however, is of ancient date. Then he

is so rich, I understand, and his estates unencumbered, which every nobleman's is certainly not. And again, he is so much looked up to here. He may be the first gentleman of the neighbourhood ; for though our family has been settled here during three hundred years, yet my father is so indolent, and odd, he will be at no trouble to keep up his consequence. And besides all this, the estates almost join, they lie so close."

Leonora was now interrupted by her maid, who tapped at the door, and showing a pair of white satin shoes, begged to know how the strings were to be sewed on.

" Dear me, Prudence," said her lady, " how very bad is your memory ! I told you, this morning, I would have the riband sewed on thus ; and see, here is the very pin I put as a mark."

" I'm sure, ma'am," answered the cunning maid, " I beg your pardon ; but I was pertickillilly desirable that you should look quite comafo, as my good lady in London used to say ; I mean fashingable and nice to-night, above all the nights in the year."

" And pray, for why, Mrs. Prudence ?" said

Leonora, still looking in the glass ; “ why do you wish me to be *comme il faut* to-night ? ”

“ Indeed, ma’am,” said Prudence, “ I had my reesins for what I said ; ouso’mever, if you insist upon knowing, it will be my pervince to obey.”

“ Then say on, I desire you,” replied Leonora ; “ for you seem much more desirous to speak than I am to press you : why do you wish me to look well to-night, in particular ? ”

“ Why, ma’am,” answered Prudence, “ all the world will be talking, and saying things, and especial on some subjects, which folks habitate themselves to talk upon ; matches, for example, are often made among some ; and lately we were all hearing somethink.”

“ And pray what ? ” asked Leonora, blushing.

“ Indeed, ma’am, I donnow whether the folks be respired or not ; but all says my lady is to have Sir Awlfrid Parmstun, and Mr. Buff, his man, says he’d lay five pounds upon it ; for his master colours so when he gives and takes a note from here ; and many other things, which proves his partridgeality.”

“ What nonsense ! ” said Leonora, after a pause of some minutes ; “ indeed, Prudence, it

is very silly of them to talk on such subjects ; besides, I shall never be married, I dare say."

"Indeed, ma'am, I hope you will be married, and what is more, I am sure of it. But there is no nississity for being in a hurry ; and before we have all been to Lunnun, too. I remimber a lady I lived with, her cousin, a fine young lady, was going to be married to a young gentleman in the country, and somebody over-puersaded her to wait, and go with her friend to Lunnun, and she did, and there saw a lord, that fell in love with her ; and she run away to Gritty Green, and had him, because her father did not like it. And now she has a cornet in her coach, and her lin-nin in the ouse is marked in a cornet."

"But then," said Leonora, "the lady's first lover might not be a very accomplished handsome man."

"Yes, indeed, ma'am, he was complushed ; and as andsim as Sir Awlfrid."

"What is Sir Alfred to me ?" said Leonora, sharply, "that you mention him thus ?"

"I confess, I should not like to have him for a master," said Prudence : "I am sure, ma'am, if you ave no partridgeality, I have none. I know whether lords, and dukes too, would not be at somebody's command in Lunnun, and I should

be proud, indeed, to be lady's gentlewoman to real noblety. Besides, marry come up, its no reckoningdation to marry, if Mr. Buff says true."

"And what does the fellow say?" asked Leonora.

"Why, he said, no longer agone than yister-day," answered Prudence, "that he was sure there was not a soberer, discreeter, pertickellerer gintleman anny where than his master; that he was quite strict with his sister, and kept her all retired, as ladyees ought to be, he said; and that if his master was to marry, he would be ten times more pertickeller than ever with his wife. And that Miss Parmstun was allays up at eight o'clock to make breakfast, and read prayers first, and ordered all the survunts in at night, at ten, to say prayers again; and that Miss is just as pertickeller with the maids, and every body, as her brother is with her; and that she never gives sich a think as a white gown, or a hartifissial flower, to her own woman, but makes up her gowns into caps, and sich-like, for poor folks. I am sure I should hate Miss Parmstun to live with: she'd be allays meddling and making with either my lady or me."

"I confess, Prudence, she is no favourite of mine," said Leonora.

"Oh, I know that well enough," answered

Prudence ; “ for don’t you rimmimber you was taking her off to Miss Bell, after the dance, ma’am ? but I little thought, then, she was to be Sir Awlfrid’s sister.”

“ I had forgotten you were present,” said Leonora ; “ it is, however, of no consequence : I believe there is no danger of my interfering with Miss Palmerstone, or of Miss Palmerstone’s interference with me. So go, Prudence, and get my shoes ready. You know how fond I am of dancing, and therefore I shall be pleased, on that account, to go to-night, not on any other ; so make yourself easy, good woman, on that subject.”

Mrs. Prudence withdrew ; but, notwithstanding her mistress’s caution, was very far from easy, when she reflected on what seemed so very probable, according to the evidence of circumstances, and of report ; for Prudence could not bear the thoughts of living in so steady and regular a family as that of Sir Alfred’s, in which his sensible and well-judging sister had, hitherto, directed every household concern with as much steadiness as disinterested benevolence. Now, Leonora was nice in matters of taste, in ordering and arranging the economy of a family. She was quick at accounts, and punctual in the discharge of them ; but then it is to be remembered, that her father

insisted upon the fulfilment of this duty, and was highly displeased when it was by chance neglected. But though Miss Clive made clever servants, she never thought of making them respectable beings. The housemaid was dressed in her white muslins on a Sunday, and Mrs. Prudence had artificial flowers in her bonnet, and never wore a cap but to please herself. Her long hair was turned up, and plaited, just in the style of her lady's, and she had several rings on her fingers. As for their moral or religious welfare, Leonora never troubled herself with it. Dolly had been a twelvemonth in the family, and had never seen the inside of a church. Prudence went sometimes, when she had a new gown or bonnet to show; and generally walked up the isle, to the Colonel's second pew, when the service was half over. Mrs. Save had never been to church but twice; and for family prayers, or such 'good regulations, they were absolutely out of the question. Not but that Mrs. Hammond had often hinted at the necessity of attention to the morals as well as to the industry of servants.

Leonora liked not any suggestions; and, moreover, expressed herself perfectly satisfied, if they did their work well. "All I want them for," she said, "is to keep the house neat and nice, and

to be in the way when they are required : every thing else is their own concern, and I cannot trouble myself on the subject."

"Then," would Mrs. Hammond reply, "you just go so far with your half-dozen women as a man does who possesses so many heads of cattle. If they are oxen, they plough, and are fed and watered ; and if horses, are rubbed down : if they possess any peculiar excellence of disposition, it is well ; and if they are ill-tempered, cross, and vicious, it is well, provided always, they do their work properly, and put forth their strength in your service. The horse when he is unfit for exertion is shot, and there is an end to him ; and the servant who is ill, or incapacitated, is discharged, and thrown upon this world, or the next, with as little compunction. But be assured, Leonora, this remissness will one day be laid to your charge, as mistress of a family ; for you have it in your power to benefit others, and neglect the opportunity."

Leonora generally yawned over such advice, or else argued perversely upon it. And at length Mrs. Hammond ceased to give it, being quite hopeless of a change. Still she grieved to see how vanity, boldness, and cunning prevailed among the Colonel's servants, in consequence of

the latitude they enjoyed; and she determined to hold as little communication as possible with any one of them; and fearing any sad consequences with respect to the young woman she had brought from Cheltenham, she kept her generally up stairs at work, and bought for her several useful books, the reading of which might counteract the tendency of all she saw and heard in the hall.

Leonora soon followed her maid up stairs, and then went to her sister, whom she found lying down to rest, after an hour's sitting up. In a few minutes, Miss Clive and her cousin retired to dress for dinner, when Lady Royston's maid came running to them, to say that her lady was taken ill. The cousins hastened, thereupon, to the apartment of Lady Royston.

CHAP. IX.

If a thing be not right, do it not ; if it be not true, speak it not."

M. AURELIUS.

THEY found the Lady supported by Mary Kelly, and in a state of insensibility. Fanny would immediately have sent for Mrs. Hammond, but that she feared to alarm Bell, in her present delicate state ; she and Leonora, therefore, loosened the Lady's clothes, and with the women's help removed her to the bed. After administering vinegar, and salts, and such remedies, for a few minutes, they had the pleasure to see her open her eyes. Violent sickness followed this attack ; and it was not till within half an hour of dinner that she became more composed. "What will your Ladyship wear to dinner?" said Robbins, on perceiving her mistress look at her watch.

"I will not alter my dress till afterwards," replied Lady Royston. "I am going, you know, to a party to-night, if I possibly can : I hope this sickness will be over soon."

“ Dear madam,” replied Fanny, hastily, “ you are too good. We can very well be content to —” here Fanny stopped ; for she saw a deep blush on Leonora’s countenance, and she felt for the disappointment of her cousin.

“ No, no, my dear,” replied the Viscountess ; “ I promised you both I would take you to this dance, and I will do so if I can any way manage it. It is a long time now since I had any attack of this kind, which I suppose is bilious. The last was over in an hour, and I was pretty well in the evening. But once, I remember, I was ill nearly a whole day : I think it was whilst I was on a visit at my Lord Flamborough’s.”

“ Yes, my Lady,” said Robbins, “ I think it was ; and that is just six years since.”

“ And what was the cause, ma’am ?” asked Leonora, looking as unconcerned as if there were no ties of relationship between them.

“ Why, my dear, it was ascribed,” said Lady Royston, “ to a good deal of trouble I had been in for the loss both of your uncle and others of my family. Cheltenham was advised for me, and certainly was of benefit ; but at times I feel a return of the complaint, and especially if I eat of certain things ; which makes me suppose, I must be bilious, whatever might be the origin of it.

You may have remarked, I never eat pastry : to-day, at luncheon, I forgot myself, and tasted a very fine cranberry tart, and for this, I suppose, I am now suffering ; however, I hope to be well after dinner,—at any rate, well enough to go, if I keep quietly up in my room. So do not wait, my dears, but send me bye-and-bye my dinner here. I shall eat no meat ; a little mashed potatoe, or some soup, will be all I shall want ; I have no appetite.”

So saying, Lady Royston drew up the counterpane over her shoulders, and shut her eyes ; and the young ladies went back each to her respective dressing-room.

Miss Beresford made a little alteration in her dress, and went to Bell’s room, to acquaint Mrs. Hammond with Lady Royston’s indisposition ; and soon after, the family were summoned to dinner.

Fanny lifted up her eyes to her cousin, and was astonished to find her hair braided, and dressed, and a bunch of roses on one side of her head.

“ What ! are you dressed, my dear ? ” said the Colonel to his daughter : “ I thought your aunt was ill.”

“ She ate something which disagreed with her,

sir," said Leonora; "but she is recovered now, and said she should go with us to-night."

"Oh, very well," replied the Colonel; "I do not go myself: I dislike dances, therefore I shall sit up stairs, and have a game of chess with Bell, if she is well enough for it."

Immediately after dessert was finished, Leonora retired, and went to the Viscountess, who had not eaten a mouthful of food, and was now complaining of sickness. Leonora, mad with vexation, sat down by the side of the bed in silence. Presently, Mrs. Hammond and Fanny tapped at the door, and being admitted, went up to Lady Royston, and very kindly enquired how she felt herself. The Lady replied, and then pausing, said, "I almost fear, my dear girls, I shall not be able to go: I really am sorry to disappoint you. Perhaps, Leonora, your papa would take you both himself."

"Papa can't bear a dance, ma'am," replied Leonora, sharply. "I know it is of no use to say any thing to him about it."

"Well, it is very unlucky," answered the kind old lady; "I am only sorry, girls, on your account."

"Oh," replied Leonora, with a forced smile, "I was afraid you would not be able to go, ma'am."

“ Indeed! ” said Lady Royston, leaning on her elbow, and raising herself up in bed. “ Why, child, I thought you had dressed your head? ”

This circumstance Leonora had forgotten. She coloured, and stammered out some kind of excuse, to which her aunt gave little attention, the subject itself seemed so much to occupy her. At length she said, “ I will wait till seven o’clock, and if I am no better then, I fear, my dears, you will be obliged to send excuses, if you think your papa would not let you go with any lady of the neighbourhood.”

“ He would not trust us with any one but Mrs. Goldsmith,” replied Leonora, “ and she is not going. Lydia Goldsmith was to have gone in our carriage, in which papa offered her in your name a seat, you know, ma’am.”

“ Yes, he wished it, and I requested him to do so,” answered Lady Royston; “ but how will this good young lady manage? Dear, dear, I hope she has some other friend to depend upon,” observed the Viscountess. “ If my head was not so very bad, I might attempt it, but really I think I could hardly sit up in my chair.”

“ I am sure your Ladyship could not,” said Robbins; “ when these sick head-aches come on, you are not fit for any thing but to lie down

on the bed. And surely the young ladies cannot expect that you should go, my Lady."

"Indeed we do not," said Fanny, in the most ingenuous manner. "Neither my cousin nor myself can be so unreasonable as to think of such an exertion. So do not, dear madam, give a thought more on the subject. Only consider if we can do any thing to ease your Ladyship."

"Thank you, thank you, Miss Fanny," said the Viscountess. "Nothing will do me good but quiet, I believe, and a dish of tea."

"I will go and order some," said Leonora.

"And you may as well write the notes," added her aunt.

"Very well, ma'am," said Miss Clive; "but it wants a quarter to seven o'clock," said she, looking hopelessly at the watch.

Fanny followed her to the drawing-room; when Leonora threw herself on the sofa, and, after swelling with vexation some minutes, burst into tears.

"It really is too bad," said she, "to be disappointed two successive Saturdays. If Bell was ill I am sure my aunt is not: I wish she had kept in her own county, and had not come teasing here;—a fidgetty, old tiresome thing. She might go out to-night if she liked."

Miss Beresford stared at her cousin, and said, "Why, really, I do wonder to hear you say so, considering how very anxious she is, and kind too. No, Leonora, you cannot think what you say. You are vexed, my dear, and so am I; but more on your account than my own, I assure you."

"Oh, as for that," said Leonora, "I don't know; but I do think what I said of my aunt; she is a fidgetty cross old woman, and, I am convinced, loves in her heart to thwart me. As for the notes, I shall not write them, and so I shall beg you to do it. One is to be sent to Miss Palmerstone, and one to Miss Goldsmith."

"Well, cousin, I will write them, if you desire it," said Fanny, although she was much hurt with Leonora's manner towards her; "and had I not better do so immediately, for the clock is striking seven? What am I to say?"

"You may say what you choose," replied Miss Clive, peevishly: "you know as much of my aunt's whims as I do, though you pretend to make excuses for her."

Fanny, whose mild temper was not easily irritated, made no reply; but sat down, took a quire of note-paper, and was just going to address the physician's daughter, when Leonora darted

forward, took a few sheets of the paper from her, and saying, "I shall write to Lydia myself," penned the following note : —

" My dear Friend,

" I am sorry to tell you that we are all to be disappointed of our dance to-night, unless you can find some one else to go with to the Palmerstone's, or that your father, less indolent and tiresome than mine, will take you himself. This is the second time I have been disappointed lately ; once, because people chose to say that Bell was too ill for us to go out with propriety, when I very well knew she could be in no great — I mean very great danger ; and now, to-night, because that provoking, old, disagreeable aunt of ours chooses to stay at home, and fancy, all of a sudden, she must lie down on the bed. I am sure there is hardly any thing the matter with her, except that she has eaten too much. She pretended to be sick, but it was only pretence. I am vexed beyond measure, because I am so very fond of dancing. Pray, is Mr. Thorpe to go ? What a coxcomb the man is ! and yet one cannot help laughing at him. I intended to have had the delight of making him quite mad, for I would not have spoken to him. Do pray call,

after church, to-morrow, and let me have the history of to-night, what every one said, and how every one looked, &c. This is supposing you go, which I dare say you will contrive to do by some means or other, to contemplate the beautiful form of your ever-to-be-revered Miss Palmerstone, who, you know, is no favourite of mine,—*encore*. I have written myself almost into a laughing humour; but, I assure you, I am as vexed as possible, notwithstanding. I shall expect to hear who our friends dance with, &c.

“ Believe me,

“ With kind regards to all your family,

“ Yours, very affectionately,

“ LEONORA CLIVE.”

Miss Beresford's note was as follows:—

“ My dear Miss Palmerstone,

“ I am deputed by my cousin to make excuses for the absence of Lady Royston and her two companions from your dance this evening, for which we are the more concerned, as indisposition is the cause. Our kind, good friend was seized this afternoon with a distressing head-ache and sickness, which still affect her so much that she cannot sit up, and is, consequently, unfit for any

exertion whatever. She is so good as to regret the disappointment as much for us as for herself, and this is not a little ; for we know how highly she values the society of those who would have welcomed her to the Abbey. My cousin is writing to Miss Goldsmith, whom we were to have taken with us. We hope this young lady will not, in the end, be disappointed, but will be chaperoned by some other friend. My cousin Bell is, I am rejoiced to say, improving, though very gradually. She can now sit up an hour at a time ; but she is very much reduced, and has lost every bit of colour from her cheeks. I will not let slip the opportunity of thanking you for your kind message by Sir Alfred respecting my father and mother. I do not expect them in England for several weeks. My dearest papa is much benefited, and is now established in Lisbon for a time. I wished extremely to have joined them, and have gone with my brother, who set off last week, but my dear mamma does not seem to wish me to leave England as I am now so well in health, and I have therefore given up all idea of going. Had she been agreeable to my going there, I should have liked it extremely ; but as it is, I will expect them, and hope. I should not have troubled you with so long a note, but

that you are so good as to encourage me to speak of my beloved mamma and papa. With the kind compliments of Lady Royston and my cousin to you,

“ I am,
“ My dear Miss Palmerstone,
“ Your very obliged friend,
“ FRANCES BERESFORD.”

Just before Fanny's note was ready, Miss Clive's was finished ; and she rang the bell for a servant to saddle a horse, and take both. Fanny then offered her note to her cousin to read. She just glanced at it, folded both up, and prepared to seal them.

“ Will you direct them, then ? ” said Fanny. This is mine.”

“ Oh, very well : I know my own,” replied Leonora, without turning her head, as she looked out a seal from her watch. She sealed both as Fanny left the room, and then wrote the addresses ; and as the notes were folded both exactly alike, and written on the same kind of paper ; as, besides, Miss Clive, according to her custom, had disdained to take any notice of information which was offered her, she actually wrote “ Miss Palmerstone ” on the note for Lydia Goldsmith, and ad-

dressed Fanny's to the physician's daughter. The man then came in, and both were delivered to him, with orders to set off immediately.

When he had gone half a mile, he met Sir Alfred's man with a letter to Miss Clive. The servants therefore stopped, and having interchanged their despatches, returned home.

Miss Clive recognised Lydia's hand-writing, and having broken the seal, found that her friend had been fetched in Miss Palmerstone's carriage to dinner at the Abbey, where she was to dress for the dance, and remain all night, Sir Alfred and his sister having prevailed upon her mother to let her do so. There was a very kind wish expressed by Lydia, that the young ladies would be early, with many thanks for Lady Royston's offer of protecting her, &c.

All this was very well: Leonora put the note in her work-basket, and thought no more about it. She forgot, as some people are apt to do, that there was a message for others in the house; or that any other besides herself would be gratified by seeing it.

Colonel Clive presently after came in, and upon enquiry learnt what had been done. "It is quite right, my dear," said he: "it is as it should be. You may go to many a party, but you will

have very few such opportunities of showing a due respect to your aunt, who is, notwithstanding some things, a very worthy woman. I give you great credit, my dear, for all this; and I am rejoiced that my good Lydia is not deprived of her amusement. I saw the man, who told me she was visiting at the Abbey. We will have a game at whist in the old lady's room to-night, if she can bear it. Go and tell her, Leonora, what you have done, she will be pleased with you; so will my pretty Fanny too; she is a dear little girl, and so is Bell, and so you are all." Thus speaking, he kissed his silent daughter, who endeavoured in vain to look easy under undeserved praise, and then led her to the door.

CHAP. X.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

KING SOLOMON.

MEANTIME the two notes arrived safe at the Abbey, and were sent up to the two ladies, who happened to be in their respective chambers, making some alteration in their dress. Miss Palmerstone saw, "My dear friend," and then turning to the signature read, "L. Clive." Very friendly, indeed, and tolerably presuming on my brother's attentions, thought she; but she went on reading, and remarking upon what she read, in this manner:—"Cannot go to the Palmerstone's," (I, too, am disappointed in that;)—"indolent and tiresome father," (dutiful, good girl!)—"Bell in no danger," (when she was all but dying! affectionate sister!)—"disagreeable aunt; fancies she is ill," (tender-hearted niece!)—"Does Mr. Thorpe, the coxcomb, go? for me to have the delight of making him jealous;" (delicate-minded woman! admirable calculator! who laughs with and receives

attentions from several gentlemen at a time, so that as one withdraws, there may be another in reserve :) — “ the beautiful form of Miss Palmerstone,” (complimentary, forsooth! but it were almost better to have, methinks, Miss Palmerstone’s form, with some little nobleness of mind, than Miss Clive’s person with none.) — “ No favourite of mine ;” (no, no, where that favourite of Martinus Scriblerius, according to the doctor’s decision, reigns paramount ; in other words, when self is the grand favourite, there is no room for any other.) — “ Who our friends dance with ? ” — (And pray, my dear Miss Clive, who are your friends ? I suppose you mean your lover. That he is not your husband, I bless heaven ! My brother would be a miserable man with a wife ever so lovely in person, but so deformed in mind as thou art, Leonora.)

As the young lady finished the note, some one knocked at her door : she slipped the paper into a drawer, and opened it.

Miss Goldsmith said, “ May I come in to speak to you ? I have just received a note directed to me, which I am sure was written for you.”

“ And from whom ? ” enquired Miss Palmerstone.

“ From Miss Beresford,” answered Lydia :
“ here it is.”

“ Do you blush to show it me ? ” asked her friend.

“ No, surely,” said Lydia ; “ I own to you I have read it ; but there is nothing but what is creditable to the writer in the contents.”

“ So I should suppose, from a mind so well regulated as Miss Beresford’s,” replied Helen. “ I wish I could say as much for her neighbours. Look here, my dear Lydia, I have the letter intended for you, which I will show you, only on condition of its being returned to me. I will take no unfair advantage of such a specimen, believe me ; duty will require me to make some communication of its contents to a party nearly concerned, but farther than ourselves it shall not transpire.”

Lydia, much surprised, made a promise to return the letter, and Miss Palmerstone then gave it to her. This amiable young woman, who had known Leonora from her infancy, and really loved her, perused the sentiments, which she knew the writer to be capable of expressing, with much concern, and as she gave back the paper in silence to Miss Palmerstone, her eyes were full of tears.

“Come, my dear Miss Goldsmith,” said her friend, “let us go down stairs; never waste a tear upon so unworthy a being.”

“Oh, do not say so,” replied Lydia; “recollect she has not the advantage of a mother; we should make allowances for her.”

“Hold, my good friend,” answered Miss Palmerstone. “I will make no allowances where the advantages are so many. But I will recollect myself, as you desire me, and I will tell you in what way. First, that Miss Clive must have been fourteen years of age when she lost the Lady Elizabeth, her mamma; and, if it be permitted me to say it, at this instant, I lost mine, though she lingered on earth some years afterward, by a stroke of the palsy, which deadened every faculty, at the age of twelve. Secondly, that in her father this young lady has no example, whatever, of the spirit she is possessed with. Thirdly, that she has a fine understanding, delicacy of taste and judgment, and reading sufficient to inform her of every shade of right and wrong, much more of those excesses into which she runs. Fourthly, I dare say, from your remarks of Mrs. Hammond, that if Miss Clive had not known what good was before she knew her, that she has been taught it. Fifthly, but enough: she is a narrow-souled,

selfish, envious, young woman ; and, although her beauty is exquisite, her graces of person many, and her natural and acquired taste distinguished, yet, with such a wife, my brother, or any man of feeling, would be miserable. Habits and disposition only can qualify a woman to be a good wife. Beauty and accomplishments are delightful, yet they are but secondary. Now, I will acknowledge to you, that from the time I first saw this young lady I have disapproved of her. You may judge how much hurt and disappointed I am at the marked attention my brother shows her : but he must not marry her ; he shall not ! I cannot see his happiness thrown away on such a woman. Neither would Miss Clive be happy to submit to our habits and way of life. A wild, rambling youth, like Mr. Thorpe, would suit her better, though she has an understanding far superior to his ; but for settled principles I fear she is no better off than he is ; and this I say, my dear Lydia, from no disrespect to your worthy father ; for he has not been long enough his guardian to be at all responsible for the young man's principles or conduct."

As Miss Palmerstone finished these words, she hastened forward to the drawing-room, in which her brother was, and delivered to him Miss Be-

resford's note. She then sat down on the sofa, and closely observed his countenance as he perused it. Much gratified, she saw he looked down to the name, as he said,—

“ Miss Beresford writes a very beautiful hand : she is a very agreeable, modest, young woman ; and were her cousin not near her, one might think she was a very pretty girl. But how is this ? It is directed to Miss Goldsmith.”

“ The two young ladies undertook to write to us both,” said Miss Palmerstone, “ and our letters have been misdirected.”

“ I see but one, where is the other ?” enquired Sir Alfred.

“ Never mind ; read that first,” replied his sister.

He hastily did so ; and then said, peevishly,—

“ How very unlucky we are ! this is the second time we have been disappointed lately. I am sorry, too, that the Viscountess is indisposed. She is a favourite of mine.”

He took two or three turns across the room, and suddenly stopped.

“ Sister,” whispered he, “ could we put off this party ?”

“ It is impossible,” answered Miss Palmer-

stone: "the company will be here in a quarter of an hour. But why do you wish to put it off?"

"I wish —— I do not care for the dance to night," replied the Baronet, throwing himself into a chair. "Come, Helen, do give me the note from ——" He hesitated.

Miss Goldsmith delicately walked into the library, which was adjoining; and in much inward agitation left the brother and sister to converse together.

Helen went up to him, and said, "I have locked up the note, for a very particular reason; and I cannot give it you till the party at Lady Warwick's is over. This will be, perhaps, in ten days; and you will see all the persons you are desirous of meeting there."

"And why do you treat me thus?" said Sir Alfred: "why will you not show it me directly? Tell me what your reason is for such extraordinary conduct?"

"I cannot explain myself yet," replied Helen: "wait patiently, a week or two, and then, my dear brother, I will open my whole heart to you."

"It is not sisterly," said Sir Alfred, breaking abruptly from her.

"Do not say so," replied Miss Palmerstone:

“my affection for you is my only motive ; and you will see it yourself.”

Sir Alfred was going to reply, when the company was heard, and he retreated to another room to compose himself, before he met them.

Lady Royston continued poorly all the evening ; but the next day was recovered sufficiently to call, at Leonora's request, upon Mrs. Goldsmith, where she saw Lydia, now returned, but dejected, and not inclined to talk of the dance at the abbey, which had gone off very well. She longed to ask whom Sir Alfred danced with, if he did dance ; but as modesty would not permit her to mention his name, Lydia's private reasons influenced her in the same manner, and Miss Clive returned home in no very good humour, and found, to her mortification, a card of Sir Alfred's, who had gone across some bye-lanes, and so missed the carriage. There was also a note of enquiry for Lady Royston ; but no answer from the Baronet's sister, which surprised her extremely.

CHAP. XI.

Self-denial is the most exalted pleasure, and the conquest of evil habits is the most glorious triumph.

TILLOTSON.

BELL, in two or three days, was rather stronger; but looked so ill, that Lady Royston grew alarmed, and resolved to urge the necessity of going up to London with her for change of air, and further advice. To this Dr. Goldsmith generously assented, when Colonel Clive, who now felt all the anxiety of his aunt, with delicacy proposed it. The Lady wrote, accordingly, to her housekeeper, whom she had sent to town to prepare her house; and the whole party in a week paid their farewell visits to their neighbours, and set off. They travelled but slowly, making scarcely more than twenty miles a day; but as the invalid seemed to improve, by change of air and scene, every one besides was cheerful and exhilarated; Leonora was particularly so; for she was delighted at the idea of seeing London, and of meeting Sir Alfred, who had told her that the

country would lose its best charm without her, and that he should bring up his sister, and her elderly companion, in a month, or sooner, if he could arrange his affairs in less time.

The party arrived safe in Park Lane ; and the excellent air of Hyde Park, with change of scene, soon worked a material improvement in Bell's health. She was shortly able to ride on horseback with her papa ; and the roses once more began to bloom on her cheek. Her family were delighted, and knew not how to express their joy. But who can describe the heartfelt satisfaction of Mrs. Hammond, when she found that this illness, so alarming, and nearly so fatal, was likely to prove a blessing of the most unhopèd for nature ? Blind mortals that we are. How often may we be chastised by a Father in mercy to our wants, and in pity to our necessities ! And whilst we have bewailed our afflictions, and been bowed to the earth by their weight, how have these very visitations proved the means of awakening our feelings, and bringing repentance to our bosoms !

An illness so severe, the undoubted consequence of such odious intemperance ; her agonising pains, but too well remembered ; the shame attendant on the exposure ; the latent and kindly feelings of a naturally good disposition,

roused and awakened by so many, and such strong marks of affectionate and anxious solicitude, and above all, the knowledge of the extreme danger she was in, which was often detailed by one of the officious domestics ;—all these overpowering convictions and recollections made the most profound impressions on Bell's mind and heart. She had lain for hours, on the couch, or bed, in deep meditation, before she was able to sit up ; and as her health improved, it was remarked, that she spoke less than usual. Something seemed to prey on her mind ; and every method was resorted to, to cheer and divert her. Even the Viscountess would exert her skill, and endeavour to brush up her memory, to relate all the curious adventures or stories she had ever heard of, or been engaged in. It was, however, in vain. Bell would listen, and seem grateful for the attentions of her friends ; but she immediately relapsed into her thoughtful moods, and looked on all that was passing with the same unconcern. It was chiefly on this account that the family were anxious to take her to London ; for even Leonora could not, unmoved, behold the extraordinary paleness of her sister's cheek, or the apparent vacancy of her once intelligent mind.

The party had been in town about a week, and

the pleasing change already noticed in her health was beginning to be observed, when one morning a message was brought by Mary Kelly from Miss Bell, to say she wished to breakfast in her own room, which she had not done for several days. Mrs. Hammond looked alarmed; the Colonel surprised.

“I hope she is not more indisposed to-day,” said the Viscountess.

“No, my lady,” answered Mary: “she is much better; but she told me to give this letter.” Mary gave the letter, accordingly, to the Colonel; who, on hastily breaking the seal, began to read as follows:—

“My dearest and kindest papa,

“Ever since that dreadful night when I was in such agony, and my head was so distracted, and my life was in such danger,—ever since that terrible night have I been thinking and thinking, oh, my dearest papa, over my past life. You have no idea, my dear, good papa, nor you, my kind aunt, how naughty I have been! but I will tell you, I am resolved now to tell you, and when I have said all, I will promise, that I will indeed turn over a new leaf, as dear, generous Mrs. Hammond has often and often entreated me to do; I promise you all, I

will try ; and you may depend upon me, if I do promise ; for dear Mrs. Hammond knows I would scorn to utter an untruth.

“ Dearest and best papa, see how I have wasted my time, and how sad a writer I am ! and besides, so ignorant that I cannot express on paper half that I feel. But I have been trying to hit on a plan for showing my sorrow, for all my past misconduct, and promising to amend. First, I thought I would speak to you all ; but I know I could not say all I wish to say. So I thought I would write ; and I have been considering these three weeks past what to put down. I have blotted the paper many a time with my tears, but do not be uneasy, my ever dearest papa ; they are pleasant tears ; the very hope of being a better girl, and being loved, deservedly, by my dear, kind friends, makes me quite happy ; and I am happy, and I will be cheerful ; and I am now getting better every day, and my appetite is much better ; and now that I have written my letter, and good resolutions, as I call them, I can sleep all night, and ride in the day, by the side of my most dear papa ; and think that I may some time or other be a comfort to him, and, perhaps, do credit to those who are so kind as to teach me, as indeed I will try very, very hard to be.

“ Dear, kind friends, — all of you, — to be so anxious when I was so ill, and I such a worthless, wicked girl! How can I ever thank you enough for your kindness! How can I ever be grateful enough for the mercies of my heavenly Father, for sparing my life! I will endeavour to repent, and to lead a new life, in word as well as in deed. Amen.

“ This letter is for all of you. I behaved ill before you all, and I will acknowledge it before you; and I will promise to amend before you all: and now I will tell you my resolutions.

“ They are, to study my duty in the Holy Scriptures, which I read every day to Mrs. Hammond; and to do my duty, as my Catechism tells me, to God and my neighbour. First, I will try to believe in God, and to love and serve him with all my heart, and with all my mind, and with all my strength; and next, I will try and love my neighbour as myself, and do unto all men as I would they should do unto me; to love, honour, and succour my father*; to honour the King, and submit to my governors and teachers; to hurt nobody, by word or deed; to

* The pen was drawn through the words “and mother,” and there was a large blot just by, as if a tear had fallen on the wet ink.

be true and just in all my dealings ; to bear no malice or hatred in my heart ; to keep my hands, oh, my busy hands ! from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil-speaking, and my body in temperance. This, which you will all know I have copied from the Catechism, is what I intend to do ; and I entreat you, dearest papa, to keep this letter, that if I should forget my promise, which I feel determined to keep, you may draw it from your pocket, and show it to me ; or good Mrs. Hammond may ask for it, to remind me of my once wicked life. So now, my heart is light, and I am happy ; and I hope soon to be allowed to begin my studies, and to show you, dearest papa, that I am indeed your ever-dutiful and grateful daughter,

“ ARABELLA CLIVE.”

The Colonel read this letter aloud, as every eye was bent on him, on its appearance. But when he came to Bell's self-accusations, he hemmed and coughed, and then exclaimed, “ Nonsense ! What has the dear girl got in her head ? She a wicked girl ! — not she, indeed. As good a hearted lass as any in England, though I say it, who am her father. True, she made herself ill, poor girl, with her bit of toasted cheese ; but what of that ? To be sure, she ought to learn the

Catechism, — that is very right ; and to do her duty ; but there is no fear of that, when she is well taught, as no doubt she is : and so, my little Bell, you and I will have a ride in the Park to-day ; and as for the letter, we will keep all our good resolutions, my lass, and put the epistle in the fire——”

“ In the fire ! ” said Lady Royston. “ No, no, nephew, that will never do : it would be a pity indeed to burn so pretty a composition : indeed, nephew, the whole thing does great credit to my little niece ; and I do hope she will be the better for her illness as long as she lives.”

“ Poor Bell ! ” said Leonora, a good deal touched ; “ what an infinity of trouble must it have cost her to write down four long pages ! Why, I never knew her write a note of four lines without beginning half-a-dozen times, and tearing up as many sheets of paper. Well, if she really will practise, and learn her music, among other things, she shall have the grand piano-forte, and I will have the new one my papa has offered me for some time past. Poor Bell ! I really wonder who ruled the lines for her ; and how she contrived to write all her lamentations, without ever being seen.”

“ Dear girl ! ” cried Fanny, her eyes sparkling

through a tear : “ I was sure she would be, one day, all her friends could desire ; for she has a fine noble disposition naturally, has she not, dear Mrs. Hammond ? ” said Fanny, with animation, and turning round.

“ She has,” answered that lady ; “ for she naturally loves truth, and abhors a falsehood ; and for this grand reason I have always thought, that, if some overpowering conviction could strike home to her bosom, she would become another creature. What a blessed illness will this have been, if she lives to act upon her resolutions ; for that she will act, I have no more doubt than I have that this epistle is the picture of her own repentant and awakened feelings.”

“ It is a very pretty and a very proper letter,” said the Viscountess, “ and is an apology for all her past faults, Mrs. Hammond ; and if her papa does not keep it, I will ; and you will please to tell her so, with my love.” Thus saying, Lady Royston, with a very well satisfied air, resumed her newspaper, and dismissed the subject from her mind.

The Colonel, in excellent spirits, left the table to go to his horses. Leonora sat down to write to, in order to obtain a letter from, Miss Goldsmith. Mrs. Hammond retired with beaming

eyes, and a heart swelling with grateful emotion and pleasing hopes from this happy change ; and Fanny stepped out of the room to visit and cheer the repentant Bell, and to strengthen her by the approbation of all the party.

When she entered Bell's chamber, she found the young lady with her breakfast untouched before her. She cast a timid glance on Fanny, as if to read the impression her letter had made. " Dear Bell," said Fanny, taking her hand, and kissing her, " I have all manner of pleasant things to tell you ; and we are all so happy to find your health is mending. The Colonel says you must have a nice ride with him this morning ; but come, —what! your breakfast not begun yet? That will never do. Shall I pour out your cocoa?"

" Ah, Fanny," said Bell ; " what, what did they all think of my letter ? Did my dear papa seem satisfied ? and did Leonora laugh at me ? And how did my aunt and Mrs. Hammond look ? Were they surprised, or did they shake their heads, as if they thought I could not do what I said ? Oh, Fanny, if you only knew what I have felt, before I could humble myself so much ; but I was resolved, and I did it. What did they say ?"

“Begin your breakfast,” answered Fanny, “and I will tell you every thing; but I assure you every one was pleased with your letter; and so far from shaking their heads, or laughing in derision, I think they were so gratified, that they were more ready to weep for joy. No one doubted you, dear Bell: they all seemed affected at your generous acknowledgment; and Mrs. Hammond spoke of you most kindly, and said, she knew she could trust your word. Your aunt was exceedingly pleased; Leonora was very animated; and my dear uncle said, that you were a good girl, and always had been.”

At this, the large round drops which had been gathering in Bell’s eye fell down her cheek; but she smiled through them, and said, “O, Fanny, how good it is of you to come and tell me all this! You are always the messenger of good news to me; and wherever you go, you make every body the happier for speaking to them. I wish I was like you; I would rather be like you than any other girl in the world.”

“Thank you, my dear,” replied Miss Beresford; “I am sure I feel extremely obliged to you for thinking so well of me; but I can tell you I have many faults, and should have had many,

many more, but for the excellent instruction I have had from my dear mamma, and dear Mrs. Hammond."

"Well," said Bell, "if you have faults, as you say, I do not know what they are, for I have never found them out. Now, every body has seen mine, and knows what a sad girl I have been. But I intend to mend, and my first desire will be to apply to Mrs. Hammond, to lay down a plan for me to go upon, that when my bad habits ask me and invite me, I may say, 'Down, down, begone,' as I say to our great dog at home, when he puts his dirty paws on my shoulders, and is going to lick my face."

At this remark Fanny smiled, and for a moment a cloud passed over her cousin's brow. Her cousin perceived it, and quickly said, "Forgive me, dearest Bell; I could scarcely help smiling, not at your intentions, but at your words. If I could, at such a moment, feel any thing like derision, my heart must be made of stone. I honour you for your most praiseworthy motives, and I love you better, dear girl, than ever I did in my life; and every one who knows you will love you and esteem you. But will you permit me to make an observation or two on what you have said?"

“That I will,” replied Bell; “for as I have often told you, I have more pleasure in having you to advise me than any one else in the world. I can make free with you, and open my mind to you, and tell you what I think and wish; and I am not afraid of you, as I am of my aunt and Mrs. Hammond, though I dare say when I grow good I shall not be afraid of them either; and I can depend upon what you say, which I cannot do, I mean altogether, on what Leonora says; and my dear papa indulges me so, that he either will not or does not see my faults, so that I cannot depend on him altogether, neither.”

“Well, then,” resumed Miss Beresford, “since you give me permission to do so, I will begin by asking you if you are intent on correcting your faults, whether you are sure you will succeed?”

“Yes, that I am,” said Bell, “because I am resolved upon it.”

“And can you keep your resolutions?” said Fanny.

“Yes, I can,” answered Bell stoutly. “I remember, some years ago, they offered me a roast chicken, a sweet-bread, and asparagus for my supper, if I would sit still, and have my tooth drawn; and I promised and performed, though it was a double tooth; and I never cried out once.”

“That was very heroic, and very admirable of you, dear Bell,” said Fanny; “of course, you had your supper.”

“Indeed, I had not,” answered Bell: “my governess found, after she had promised me all that, that there was not a head of asparagus in season; not a sweet-bread could be found at any butcher’s in the village; and the chicken was boiled instead of roasted. So after this, I never trusted to people’s promises, but did as I liked.”

Fanny mused on this recital. “Alas!” thought she, “how good a disposition may be spoiled by bad management. People should promise with caution, but perform boldly,” pursued she aloud.

“They should,” returned Bell: “I am an ignorant girl in most things; but all about promises and performing them, and keeping to one’s resolutions, and truth, and falsehood, — all this I know well; and I know I will perform if I resolve.”

“Now that assertion is the very point I wished to speak to you upon,” answered Fanny. “Tell me, dear cousin, why we are come up so much sooner than we intended to London?”

“Why, I suppose for change of air,” returned

she, "and to see the physicians who have attended me till within the last day or two."

"But did not your papa say positively we should visit London only a month later?" enquired Fanny.

"Yes he did, and was determined it should be so," replied Bell; "but then I was ill, and he was anxious about me; so he was obliged to act differently. But my papa is, notwithstanding, a man of his word."

"He is so," returned Fanny, "and yet he yielded to circumstances."

"But I have no circumstances to prevent my good resolutions from going into effect," said Bell: "I can perform my promises, and I will."

"Dear girl," replied Fanny, "I hope and expect you will do so; but tell me, do you think I would wilfully tell an untruth?"

"No!" exclaimed Bell, with warmth; "I am certain you would not."

"And yet," said Miss Beresford, "I had my hat and cloak on yesterday; and when you asked me where I was going to, I said, to sit for an hour or two with Lady Ashburnham, my papa's aunt. Yet I took my things off, two hours afterwards, and never went out at all."

"Of course," rejoined Bell, "when Lady Ashburnham wrote to tell you the scarlet fever had just broken out in the house, and you had better not visit her for some time. These things are very different to promises of reformation."

"In some respects, they may be. But do, Bell, say what they all tend to show."

"Why, they show the uncertainty of all that is to pass," answered Bell.

"They do," replied Fanny; "and why, let me enquire, are things so uncertain?"

"Because," replied Bell, "we are, at best, but very ignorant creatures, not knowing what is to happen to us."

"Very true," said Fanny; "or, as my papa has often said, 'Man proposes and God disposes.'"

Here Bell looked grave, and said, "Yes, Fanny, I know that too. But if man proposes to be good, God will never dispose him to be wicked."

"My dear cousin," replied Miss Beresford, her eyes beaming with tenderness and respect, "most undoubtedly and unquestionably not: for since He is perfect goodness, and truth, and holiness, all that emanates from His gracious presence, His righteous mind, must be the perfection of holiness also. We are not, therefore, speaking of the propositions and resolutions of

Infinite Perfection, but of those of imperfection and frailty; and seeing that our most agreeable plans, and apparently the best laid schemes, are overthrown in a moment, why may not our resolutions fail in shaking off the errors we have long clung to, and the habits which are grown into our very nature?"

Bell's intelligent mind suggested her cousin's aim in thus leading her on. She took her hand. "Dear Fanny," said she, pressing it between her own, "I see now what you mean, and I remember the apostle Peter. We ought not to be too confident in our own strength. I have often heard my dear departed mamma say this; but till this moment the truth never flashed upon my dark mind. Oh, Fanny! how much have I to learn!"

Here the repentant girl shed a flood of tears; whilst her cousin leaned over her, and pressed her to her bosom. "Now then, my dear Bell," said she, "now I can hope great things of you, now you begin to see that your own exertions are as nothing, and that you must apply to the Bestower of all good gifts, to assist and strengthen your feeble endeavours after what is right. We have only to ask in a proper manner to obtain; for this is a promise made to us by the divine

representative of Truth itself, in the person of the Redeemer."

"You are right, Fanny," exclaimed her cousin. "But tell me, when I find my evil habits urging me, as I ought not to trust to my own evil self, how ought I to act?"

"That holy prayer, 'Lead us not into temptation,' will teach you," replied Fanny. — "'Suffer me not, O God, to be tried, or tempted, beyond what I am able to bear;' — 'Lord help me, or I perish,' — are short addresses to the mercy of heaven for divine grace; and if preferred in a devout, earnest, anxious manner, though only from the secret recesses of the heart, will rise up in beautiful order to the throne of mercy, and will obtain instant redress. The prayer, short as it is, will no sooner be made, than half the power of temptation will be subdued. I am naturally passionate, among my other faults. My dear mother taught me these short addresses, and in moments of irritation I never use them in vain."

"Is it possible?" cried Bell: "you passionate! I never should have thought it; and this is what you do, when you are inclined to be angry! Well, it is easy to try, and I will do so."

"And you will remember the majesty of that great Power you invoke, and call to your aid, of

course, my dear cousin," said Miss Beresford. "If we seek Him and his assistance, we must do so in humility, in awe, in reverence, and in love."

"Certainly, most undoubtedly," returned Bell. "That wonderfully great Being, who so mercifully raised me up from almost the grave, and gave me back the life I had nearly destroyed,—how could I dare to address Him, excepting with all the reverence of my soul?"

"Dear girl!" exclaimed Fanny: "I am content; I am so happy about you, that I cannot express half the delight I feel. Now, shall I tell you one thing more, Bell?"

"One thing, a hundred things," replied Bell: "I love your conversation and advice; so speak."

"Then," said Miss Beresford, "I would have you get a little book, this very day, and endeavour to write in it, every evening, one good, or just, or wise sentence, that may have struck you in the course of the day; and if you cannot do this, write down, in a few words, what temptation you have resisted, or in what respect you hope you are better that day than the day before. Oh, Bell, you will find this plan the most admirable check to error, and the greatest incentive to goodness."

"Well, that plan I could also try," returned

Bell, thoughtfully, "for my resolution is fixed; I mean to *try* to amend. But, dear me, cousin, suppose any body should look into such a book: I would not mind my bad writing and spelling, but all my hidden thoughts to be read?"

"The language of sorrow and contrition for past faults would be no disgrace, but honourable to you, dear Bell," said Fanny. "However, I will tell you, that there are books, blank books, to be bought, called Albums, which ladies present to all their friends to fill up, write, or paint in: these books have a clasp, and sometimes a lock; such a one you might have, and keep the key always in your own possession; and thus your thoughts would always be your own, and inaccessible to any one else; though I have a lurking idea, Bell, that you will, one of these days, make a confidential friend of Mrs. Hammond, and even show her this very volume."

"Why, would you mind, cousin, showing her your very secret thoughts and feelings?" enquired Bell.

"No, indeed, I would not," replied Fanny; "and if I did, she can read my very thoughts in my face, often before I express them; so well does she know me, and so little have I ever concealed them from her during nearly seven years

that she has lived with us. But the first thing, dear Bell, when you become quite strong, will be to ask her advice and directions in every thing. She will draw up wise and judicious plans for you to go upon ; and as you continue your resolutions of trying to do right, she will esteem, regard, and then love you ; and she will gain upon your confidence daily. You will then be able to speak to her with the same ease that I do, and will, I doubt not, love her as dearly."

Just as Miss Beresford finished these words, a message came from the Colonel, that as it was so lovely a morning, he had ordered the horses, and the grooms had brought them to the door.

Bell hastened to swallow her cocoa, and button on her habit ; then, once more embracing her cousin, she attended her papa, who waited to accompany her to the Park.

CHAP. XII.

When we commend good and noble actions, we make them in some measure our own. PLUTARCH.

IN the evening Bell was surprised and delighted to see on her dressing-table a beautifully bound quarto volume, above an inch in thickness, with clasps, and a Bramah's lock. The key was enclosed in paper, and sealed with "F. B.," and directed to "Miss Arabella Clive." She quickly opened the note, and found that it was an offering of friendship from her cousin, who had purchased the book that very day. Bell was charmed with the volume. "Dear Fanny," exclaimed she aloud; "she never forgets: she is, indeed, a dear girl; always thinking what good she can do. No parade; no boasting; no selfishness with her. I will, I will try to be like her. And now, I will write this resolution in my book to begin with." She thereupon took the key, and opened the volume; but the first pages were already written in, thus:—

*The Book of good Resolutions. — Wise Sentences
from different Authors.*

The greater the difficulty (says a wise man) the more glory in surmounting it. Skilful pilots gain their reputation from storms and tempests.

Where there is no conflict there is no conquest; where there is no conquest, there is no crown.

Nothing is more noble, nothing more venerable, than fidelity: faithfulness and truth are the most sacred excellences and endowments of the human mind.

As the irresolute man can never perform any action well, so he that is not resolved in religion can be resolved in nothing else.

Make the most of your minute (says the Emperor Aurelian), and be good for something, while it is in your power.

Spend the day well, and thou wilt rejoice at night.

Do good with what thou hast, or it will do thee no good.

The little value Providence sets on riches is often seen by the persons on whom they are so often bestowed.

True greatness of mind is to be maintained only by Christian principles.

The blessed Redeemer has left us an example, that we should follow his steps.

Rules for the conquering of any Vice,—copied from Nelson.

The following method may be serviceable towards the conquering of any darling sin:—

1st, To fear it. The first step to be made, is to be apprehensive of that sin to which you are most subject.

2dly, To resist it. It is not enough to dread the bad consequences of a governing passion, but we must take all occasions to resist and oppose it, so that it may not get the better of us.

3dly, Fly from it. Your enemies are so dangerous, that it is always safer to avoid meeting with them than to expose yourself to the hazard of being overcome.

4thly, Pray against it. In vain do we attempt the conquest of any vice without strength from above; and since by your own experience you find it a difficult work, you cannot be too earnest for the help and assistance of God's grace.

5thly, Examine yourself often. Serious reflection upon ourselves, often repeated, is an ad-

mirable instrument of reformation : by this means no vice ever makes any considerable progress without being detected.

6thly, Persevere in the constant use of these rules, and resist all evil thoughts as they arise in your mind. Thus opposing temptation, you may at last obtain the crown of victory reserved for the faithful servants of God.

Bell most earnestly perused these pages. She then laid the book down. "Most welcome precepts, kind advisers," said she ; "silent spectators of my tears of repentance ; no caprice, no pettishness, no goodness by fits and starts, is here : quiet, persuading, gentle friends, entreating me to be good, that I may be happy. And you, my ever amiable, dear cousin, no boasting, no unkindness in you ; and yet not a breath of flattery. Sensible of all my faults, mentioning them in private, and forgetting them before others. Sweet girl ! Yes, that is friendship, if ever friendship was ; and I will show you my gratitude and my regard, by endeavouring to make myself worthy of it."

Thus dawned the rays of light and goodness in poor repentant Bell's mind ; and thus earnestly strove her amiable cousin to be of service in her

career, silently working her gentle, insinuating way ; dispensing peace and real benefits, like the beautiful gliding stream which fertilises and blesses as it flows.

In the mean time no little bustle prevailed in the grand council of the elder ladies. It was rumoured that a drawing-room would certainly be held by the Queen very shortly ; and Lady Royston had desired her niece to hold herself in readiness to be presented. These opportunities had become rare ; as Queen Charlotte felt unequal to the extreme fatigues attendant on the court-days. Every mother, or presiding lady of a family, was therefore on the alert, on the first intimation of a drawing-room ; and young ladies were brought from all parts of the kingdom to make preparations accordingly. Lady Beresford had, on this account, requested, in her last letters, that her daughter might be presented at the same time with the Colonel's ; and, if possible, and if not too great a favour, by the same lady. The Viscountess consented, with the greatest pleasure, to perform the duty of a mother to both young ladies, and intimated the same to them.

Other interesting matters also engaged some portion of attention. Sir Alfred and Miss Palmerstone were arrived at their house in Berkeley

Square; and Mr. Thorpe, too, who was just of age, had called and left his card, with his address, at the Clarendon Hotel. An invitation, besides, to a small party, had been received from the beautiful and fashionable Countess of B——, whose husband had been a brother-officer of Colonel Clive, and was besides a relation. These different affairs called unusual bloom and satisfaction to Leonora's cheek. She was gay, animated, and pleasant to all, and particularly attentive to her aunt, who, of course, was to be the chaperon.

As Colonel Clive had particularly desired that his daughter and her cousin should be attired alike at the drawing-room, Miss Beresford employed the same dress-maker; and being satisfied with Leonora's general good taste, had no particular orders to give on that account: but as she now expected her mamma in England very shortly, and had been desired by her to make several arrangements and alterations in her wardrobe, with the assistance of Mrs. Hammond, she occasionally called at several milliners, and tradespeople, to select what was considered most fashionable, and suited to her age.

It happened, on the morning of Lady B——'s party, that the two young ladies having to call in Wigmore Street, to look at some very beautiful

French artificial flowers, which had just arrived, they desired the coachman to draw up to the door. As they had read the address in an advertisement, they had forgotten the number; and Leonora, catching the check-string hastily, the horses were pulled back so suddenly, that one of them was almost thrown upon his haunches. A gentleman passing, on horseback, turned round, upon the clattering of the animal's feet, and glancing to the carriage, perceived a face he knew. He instantly turned round, bowed to the cousins, and Leonora, with a smile and blush, recognised Mr. Thorpe.

“An age positively since I saw you,” exclaimed he: “I thought I never should have that happiness again. But, is it possible! no *surveillante*! no guardian! no tedious, tiresome old what d’ye call them?—Absolutely alone, ladies? Oh, Miss Clive, if you knew what I have endured since that most unfortunate ball at my very respectable old guardian’s! But enough: he is a worthy man, and I am out of his trammels.”

Leonora laughed:—sad it is to relate, that she laughed even when the excellent Dr. Goldsmith and the amiable ladies in her father’s house were thus disrespectfully spoken of. Oh, if young persons did but consider the conse-

quences of joining in the deriding word, or the sarcastic laugh; in ridiculing what is good, or scoffing at what is venerable; — if they did but consider how much they lower themselves in reality, and how defective the principles must be, which thus yield against conviction, they would dare to be just, and have the courage to withstand the laugh of fools.

Mr. Thorpe was elated by the manner of Leonora. He alighted from his horse, which he left with his groom to hold; and coming forward, said, as the footman let down the steps, “And you, too, Miss Beresford, without madame? you must be quite happy.”

Fanny’s dark eyes turned full upon his face. “If you are really in earnest, Mr. Thorpe, in your remark, I can assure you that I am never so happy as in the company of my best friends; and I esteem those such, who are anxious to show me what is right and good, by their own bright example.” Saying this, she passed on, a flash of indignation still glowing on her cheek.

“True, true, very true, as you say, ma’am,” answered Thorpe, pulling up his collar with one hand, and offering the other to Leonora, to descend. “This cousin of yours, Miss Clive, is a vastly clever, demure young lady; but,” added

he, in a lower tone, as he still kept her hand till they entered the shop, "I would not give the fair Leonora for fifty Beresfords."

"How very absurd!" said Miss Clive, blushing, and hastening after her cousin.

"Well," replied the young man, "I say there is no comparison, I declare it, between the two. If twenty thousand a year, a tolerably fine estate and park, a pretty large mansion, and the family jewels, estimated at fifty thousand, would tempt a certain lady to be troubled with my name, — I — am —, that is," continued he, striking his whip on his boot, "I should be the happiest dog alive."

Leonora now trembled with confusion and dismay. She was inexperienced in such affairs, but she could not mistake the nature of such an address. That it was a proposal in form she could not misunderstand; yet was she taken so entirely by surprise, that she could not utter another word; but at once extricated her hand, and stepped into the warehouse, which Fanny had already entered, and was examining some very beautiful flowers.

Near the shop-door sat a gentleman, apparently deeply engaged with a newspaper. "The ladies are trying on some lace tippets up stairs, sir,"

said the shopwoman to him, "and they desired me to tell you they will return as soon as possible."

The gentleman nodded his head, and went on with his reading.

"It does not signify," exclaimed a lady at the other end of the shop, "I am certain this thing is not a French flower," holding up a rose in her hand.

"Allow me, my lady," said the mistress, "allow me to look? No, my lady, that is not French; at least it did not come from Paris. That box, Sarah, ought not to have been brought out to such customers as her ladyship."

"And why, pray?" asked the lady.

"Because, madam, we took it in only yesterday on trial, out of charity: the flowers were made by a poor French girl, whose father is in prison in this country for debt. The young person came to me yesterday, and begged so hard that I would give her a trial, that I could not refuse her. She said, if I understood her language right, that she had two little sisters dependent on her exertions. She begged so hard that I would take the flowers on trial, that I could not refuse her, madam; for I have children of my own. But, dear heart, they will never suit my customers."

“ They do not suit me, at any rate,” said the lady, “ and I think you had better advise the poor thing to try some other trade. Where are the French flowers you advertised ? ”

“ By that young lady, madam,” said the woman, pointing to the other side of the warehouse.

Miss Beresford laid down the flowers she had held, as the persons advanced ; and when they were engaged in purchases, she slipped to the other side, and addressing herself to a young woman, who served behind the counter, said, in a low tone, “ I wish you would show me the flowers made by the poor French girl.”

“ Certainly, ma’am,” replied the young woman, and fetched the box. “ My mother took them ; but I am sure they will never sell.”

Fanny examined them. “ They are not so very bad,” said she ; “ now, really, if the poor young lady was advised to attempt large flowers, such as are used for ornamenting rooms, instead of the very delicate ones required for a lady’s dress, I do think she might succeed.”

“ Well, ma’am, it is very kind in you to say so,” replied the shop-woman : “ I will tell her what you advise, when she calls.”

“ Do you know where she lives ? ” enquired Fanny.

“ No, ma’am, I do not, but I will ask her : she is to call again in a week.”

“ Do you suppose a person had good patterns who made these flowers ? ” said Fanny.

“ No, I should not indeed, nor good materials neither, ma’am : you see what very coarse pink calico is used in these roses ; and those leaves seem cut out of any bits and scraps.”

“ Poor girl ! ” said Fanny, with a tear in her eye : “ who knows the difficulty she may have had in procuring these very bits ? ”

“ Very true, indeed, ma’am,” observed the kind young person : “ I told my mother so, when the poor girl stood entreating us to take the box, and see what we could do. She gave her half a crown, for she really did seem in distress : — but there is so much distress now-a-days.”

“ It was very kind in you to give her some relief,” returned Fanny. “ Now I should like to do so too, if I knew the best way of offering it. Suppose I buy some of these flowers ? or would it be better to leave a trifle with you for her ? Besides which, I could buy a flower or two, and put in her box, as a pattern, you know.

If you will show me a few of the very fine ones, I will pay for them; and you can just put them in the box after I am gone, instead of sending them home to me," continued she, in a low, hurried tone, dropping half a guinea into the band-box.

"You are very good, indeed, ma'am," said the young woman: "how very pleased she will be!" and she tripped away to fetch some of the French flowers.

This little scene had occupied only a few minutes. Leonora had had scarcely time to recover from her vexation and embarrassment, and had not listened to a word of the poor French girl's history, so busy did she appear in selecting a bouquet of lilies and pansies for her side, and a wreath of delicate white roses for her head. The business being concluded, and Fanny having also made her purchases, the young ladies left the warehouse; when Mr. Thorpe also quitting it at the same time offered his hand to Miss Beresford: she slightly bowed, but sprang in without assistance. Leonora neither gave nor declined hers, as she lightly stepped forward; when Mr. Thorpe whispered, "Remember, fair Leonora, I expect a yes or no;" and bowing, he immediately mounted his horse, and rode off at full canter.

Miss Clive threw herself back in the carriage, and for some time uttered not a word; but when they approached Grosvenor Gate, she said, "Oh, dear, we are close to home! shall we order the coachman round the Park, Fanny?"

"Certainly, cousin, if you like it," returned she: "I am sure we may be trusted round the Park at this hour, for it is not two o'clock, and dear Mrs. Hammond cannot go out because of her tooth-ache; and Lady Royston, you know, seldom ventures in any carriage but her own, for fear of its not being well aired. I am sure, therefore, we may go, cousin, if you wish it."

"Well, I do wish it; and I conceive I am quite old enough to take a drive any where without a spy," retorted Miss Clive.

"A spy! Leonora," rejoined Fanny; "whom do you mean?"

"I do not mean you, certainly," replied Leonora: "now pray do not begin prosing. I will retract my words; I will say I did not mean any thing, nor any body, to please you."

"Indeed, Leonora, I should be grieved, instead of pleased, if you were to say what is not strictly true, however I might lament your opinions on some points," replied Fanny.

"Very well; that being settled," said Miss

Clive, "I will order the coachman to drive in the circle: and now, Fanny," pursued she, having done so, "let me ask you something. Do tell me why you refused Mr. Thorpe's assistance, when he offered to put you in the carriage?"

Fanny looked astonished. "Dear me, Leonora, why do you ask in such an odd way?"

"An odd way, do you call it?" returned her cousin, her eyes intently fixed on Miss Beresford; "I merely asked a simple question."

"But you ask me so earnestly," returned Fanny. "I do not like Mr. Thorpe, and I did not wish to receive any civility from him."

Leonora, who was seldom sincere herself, now felt certain that her cousin spoke from pique and wounded pride. She remained a short time silent. At length she said, "I would rather be envied than pitied at any time: money is a fine thing, Fanny: come now, would you refuse a noble fortune if it lay at your feet?"

Fanny laughed, and said, "No, certainly: if I had a bit of land, and on digging it could find a wedge of gold, which I might justly and fairly call my own, I certainly would not scorn to take it up, and get it made into guineas."

"But if, instead of a bit of land producing a

mine of gold, a gentleman were to offer himself, and thousands of sterling pounds, and large bright jewels besides, would you then accept a fortune?"

"That is another matter, quite," replied her cousin; "but the fortune would be the second consideration, and the owner of it the first."

"Well, then," said Miss Clive, "supposing the owner to be a person we saw not a hundred years ago? How then?—" and she blushed.

Miss Beresford now, in her turn, fixed her eyes on her cousin; and, with some agitation, said, "Leonora, surely you are jesting? but you look serious. What do your words imply? You cannot mean Mr. Thorpe?"

"It is true, however," said Leonora: "he has in his silly manner made me an offer. I should have treated it as a joke, but that he really was serious when he told me at parting that he expected an answer."

"An answer!" exclaimed Miss Beresford, "why did you not give him one at once? I am sure you could never throw yourself away upon such a man as that, even if he had a hundred thousand a year: besides there is—" here she stopped; she would have said "another;" but

a sudden choking kind of feeling rose in her throat, and she hemmed twice to recover it.

Now Leonora had no more intention of being Mr. Thorpe's wife than she had of marrying the Pacha of Egypt. She despised his folly, though she condescended to accept his flattery; and though she knew he was a man of family, and acknowledged to herself that he was tolerably handsome, yet he wanted the mind, the taste, the elegance, the address, which to a girl of refinement are always considered. Leonora's choice was made in reality in Sir Alfred's favour; but as she was persuaded her cousin really liked Mr. Thorpe, Leonora was unequal to the generous openness of acknowledging that Mr. Thorpe was wholly indifferent to her.

Fanny continued: — “ But, dear Leonora, you will not lose any time in giving your answer? It is true, Mr. Thorpe is not what we approve, but still he is a gentleman by birth and fortune, and has a right to expect an answer, and an immediate one, on such an occasion; and especially, too, when there can be no decision in his favour.”

“ Why,” said Leonora, “ did you give Lord Maryland an immediate denial? I heard that you refused him last year.”

Fanny coloured, and said, "My papa was so good as to speak for me, as I had not a favourable reply to give ; but the less that is said of such things the better."

"Let me ask, why you did not approve of him?" said Leonora: "he was not rich enough, I suppose?"

"Yes he was rich, but I did not admire him in some other respects."

"Then he was not handsome?"

He was considered handsome in Cheltenham," replied Fanny.

"Then what was the objection?" asked Leonora.

"If you are really desirous of knowing," replied Fanny, "I did not approve of his principles ; I did not think they were suited to make me happy. This, you know, cousin, was an important matter. But I hope you will never mention what you have extorted from me : it is a most ungenerous thing to talk of a refusal."

"And why do you think it ungenerous?" asked Miss Clive.

"Because," replied her cousin, "as my mamma has observed, it is no compliment to a gentleman to be refused ; and, consequently, it cannot be agreeable to him to hear that his ill fortune is spoken of."

“Why some girls feel proud of talking of their conquests,” said Miss Clive.

“I am afraid they do,” returned Fanny; “but their ways are no rule for others. Let me hope, Leonora, you will give an early answer to Mr. Thorpe; or perhaps you would like your papa to do so for you?”

“No, that I certainly should not,” retorted she: “I am very well able to manage the affair myself, as I shall undoubtedly meet him somewhere, and perhaps this evening at Lady B——’s party.”

The carriage now stopped at Colonel Clive’s door; and as the footman knocked, Leonora said, “Of course, Fanny, you will not mention what I have told you.”

“Certainly not,” replied Miss Beresford, “not even to Mrs. Hammond, if you do not wish it.”

The young ladies then alighted, and retired to their respective apartments.

That evening Lady Royston took her niece to Lady B——’s. Miss Beresford, by some mistake, had not been included in the invitation, and she declined the Viscountess’s offer of taking her; as she said she could pass a very pleasant evening at home, having promised to show Bell

how to make a kaleidoscope; which little instrument was then quite in fashion.

Lady B—— gave a concert this evening at her splendid mansion. She had invited only a few select friends; and the chief attraction was an Italian lady who had just arrived from the famous *Theatra Scala* at Milan, and was immediately to appear as *prima donna* in the next opera.

Lady Royston, with old-fashioned punctuality, was among the first of the company; and being a highly valued friend of Lady B——'s mother, fell into a pleasant chat with the amiable hostess; who, upon learning that her niece was passionately fond of music, and had a fine voice, turned to the young lady, and requested her to favour herself and the few persons present with an Italian or English air. Leonora, who in a country drawing-room was generally the loveliest girl in it, from her beauty, grace, manners, and acquirements, now appeared, with, if possible, more charms, from the embarrassment, modesty, and timidity of youth, when ushered into the widely extended and brilliant society of London.

She, however, unaffectedly complied; and with scarcely any prelude, at once struck off

with that sweet Venetian air which her father made her sing to him almost every evening, "Il Biondina in Gondoletta." The moment she uttered the first tones of this enchanting and plaintive air, every whisperer was silent. There was something so peculiarly clear, so soothing, yet so full, in Leonora's tones, that they seemed to tremble on the ear like the vibration of a silver bell, for some moments after they had ceased. A party of gentlemen who had just left the dinner-table, with Lord B——, an elderly nobleman, were ascending the stairs.

"Good heavens ! my Lord," said one of the gentlemen ; " who is that charming singer, actually warbling the boat-song of my Gondolier ? I have heard that delightful air sung a thousand times, in Venice, the most musical and melancholy of cities."

" I really know not the singer," said his Lordship ; " but why do you call Venice melancholy ?"

" It might not be so in your day, my Lord ; but in mine, the untenanted marble palaces, on the edge of the dark waters, and the empty gondolas on them, made my heart ache. Oh, that sweet air ! I must take a peep at the singer." So saying, he advanced at once into the room, just as his sister and her friend were ushered in

from their carriage; and there he beheld seated at the piano-forte the blooming and accomplished Leonora. “Is it possible! can it be possible!” muttered he to himself, and put his hand to his forehead, on which large drops rose up and clung to his fingers. “What a voice! what capability! what loveliness!” and he gazed most intently on the fair creature before him. She finished, and rose up: the plaudits commenced: one, alone, was silent. Miss Clive raised her eyes to this person, whose figure she had caught sight of: what was her amazement on beholding him, who, if pleased, should have been most ready to approve—Sir Alfred Palmerstone! The lady of the house took her hand, thanked her for the treat she had afforded, and requested another air; but Leonora pleaded unwillingness, from the increased numbers in the room, and she was led to the sofa, with a beating heart, and a bosom swelling with disappointment and vexation; but in a few moments, Sir Alfred, strong in the command of his feelings, resumed his composure, and advancing to Miss Clive, bowed, and gracefully took a seat on the other side of her. After several enquiries after her own health, that of Bell, and every other member of her family, Sir Alfred paid some compliments

upon her style of singing, and her voice ; but whether it was the force of busy imagination, or the effect of disappointment working in Leonora's mind, she thought he appeared constrained in his manner, and cold in his expressions. She felt piqued.

“ Miss Beresford is still with you, I believe ? ” said the Baronet.

“ My cousin ? oh, yes,” replied Leonora.

“ She has made a long visit at Clive Park : you must find her an acquisition.”

Leonora carelessly replied, “ Lady Beresford could not take her to Madeira, so my papa offered to receive her.”

“ But Sir Edwin is coming home immediately, I understand,” continued the Baronet.

“ I believe he is,” said Leonora, carelessly fanning herself.

The footman at this moment handing a salver to a young lady opposite, she attempted to help herself to coffee, when in over-anxiety to poise the heavy gold sugar-tongs properly on the magnificent sugar-basin, they fell with no little clatter ; and, in replacing them, with some trepidation, forgetting the prepared dish of coffee in the other hand, that also was overbalanced, and fell over the white satin robe of the next lady. Handker-

chiefs were soon in requisition; and the unfortunate owner of the dress with great good-nature assured the party it was nothing; but the unlucky actor in this scene attracted general observation; not so much for the accident, which was not very extraordinary, as for the visible distress it occasioned. Her face, her neck, and shoulders turned the colour of scarlet, and her whole countenance bespoke confusion and dismay; whilst she persisted in making so many apologies that the matter at length assumed a ludicrous appearance.

“ Dear me, madam, I am so grieved. I hope the dress was not new? but perhaps a new breadth would be sufficient? I should be quite sorry if it was spoiled,” &c.

Leonora cast her eyes towards the speaker, and actually perceived her old acquaintance, Miss Goldsmith, who, in the midst of her distress, and totally ignorant of the smiles she had excited, now caught Leonora’s eye, and began nodding, with all the zeal and eagerness of sincerity and friendship.

Leonora, the elegant Leonora, attired in white crape, embroidered with pearls, her fine hair arranged by the most famous artist in London, and its bright brown gloss set off by the delicate

hue of a garland of unsullied roses, almost shuddered, as she recognised, in a deep yellow china-crape dress, trimmed with bright red riband, red silk shoes, and a profusion of coral and gold ornaments placed indiscriminately on the bosom, head, arms, wrists, and throat, her once acknowledged friend, the cheerful, kind-hearted, playmate of her early childhood. Leonora hastily turned her head, and found in Lady B——'s vacant seat the Honourable Miss Sydenham, a lady no longer young, but one of the Queen's maids of honour. This lady was rather near-sighted; however, she distinguished Leonora, as she had seen her at Cheltenham and London, in the time of Lady Elizabeth Clive, who had once lived at court in attendance on Her Majesty also, for several years before she married.

“Miss Clive, you look charmingly to-night. I am delighted to see you here. Do tell me who that very odd person is in yellow and red,—she who is making so many apologies to the lady near her. I think she nodded to you.”

“To me!” said Leonora, “with a deep blush; oh, no.”

“Do you not know her name?” said Miss Sydenham: “some country girl, no doubt, come up to see whether London is really paved with

gold, and the trees round it dropping jewels instead of gums. What a curiosity ! Do look ;” and she laughed as she lifted up her glass to observe Miss Goldsmith ; who, more confused at having nodded and met with no acknowledgment, was now of a deeper scarlet colour than before. Alas ! Miss Clive joined in the stifled laugh against the friend of her youth, and thus denied all acquaintance with her. But the incident, for a time, oppressed her spirits ; and when Miss Sydenham walked away to speak to her brother, Viscount Sydenham, at some distance, Leonora was lost in abstraction. A thousand kind acts of poor Lydia rose up in her remembrance. When Leonora had the measles nothing could induce Lydia to quit her bedside : she gave her all her medicine ; and though only a few years her elder, she nursed her better than any domestic in the Colonel’s establishment could have done. Lydia always brought a birthday-present to Clive Park : — her own favourite hen ; a pair of white pigeons ; a beautiful spaniel, or a starling, taught with infinite pains by herself to speak and call “ Leonora.” Miss Clive was fond of flowers and fine plants. Half the curious specimens in the green-house at Clive had been sent for from the Botanical Gardens, and the Horticultural Society,

by Dr. Goldsmith, at the request of his beloved daughter, that she might bestow them on her friend Leonora. And yet, all was forgotten! Alas, alas! How much better would it be to wait for riper years before friendships are thus encouraged by parents and relations, instead of subjecting a tender heart to the pangs which so often await it, from having formed connections with the vain, the proud, the selfish, and the cold-hearted, whilst these odious qualities are, in a great measure hidden, in unformed and undisplayed character! For want of some caution many and many a tear is often shed by the aggrieved and affectionate woman, who gave her heart, in early life, to a girl who seemed to value the gift, but who, in reality, held it only till it could be conveniently thrown away for some more dazzling possessions.

Miss Clive felt some compunction, for she was young; but Lydia's gentle heart swelled with wounded feeling. She attempted to smile, as a lady rather behind her spoke kindly to her; but words she could not utter. Tears, not to be repressed, filled her eyes; and she coughed and choked in vain to hide them. Luckily the famous Italian singer entered the room at this moment, and every eye was turned upon her, as

the Duke of D—— led her forward, and presented her to the lady of the mansion. Miss Clive now perceiving, in the general commotion, a seat unoccupied by her aunt, rose up and took it; and Sir Alfred, who had been for some minutes silent, moved to another part of the room. Those persons who loved good music had then a treat; and those who did not endeavoured to be pleased. At length the professional performers, being under various engagements, retired; and a quadrille was proposed by the younger part of the company. Leonora's heart beat: she expected, as a matter of course, the request of Sir Alfred for the honour of her hand. What, then, must have been her astonishment and indignation, to see him leading across the room the half-retreating and timid Miss Goldsmith, whom he had so earnestly besought to dance, that she could not refuse, though her downcast eyes still told of the tears she had shed. Every one looked to see the elegant and handsome baronet take, with unfeigned respect, the hand of a singular country girl, put it through his arm, and with a firm step and noble demeanour look round, as if to silence every unkind whisperer.

“Is that Sir Alfred Palmerstone?” asked one: “is he really going to dance with that odd young person? Surely he is not going to marry her?”

“ Well,” observed another, “ she is really not so very awkward ; she has a very pleasing countenance.”

“ Poor thing ! ” remarked a third ; “ I dare say she was never in so large a party before : she has a very pretty figure. Who is she, I wonder ? ”

The set was presently formed ; and another of eight was called for. Three couples stood up, and a fourth was to be found, when Lady B——, suddenly advancing, said, “ Miss Clive, you surely will dance ? here is a young friend of mine just come in : shall I introduce him ? — Mr. Thorpe.”

“ Oh, I have had the honour of an introduction,” said this young gentleman. “ Now, Miss Clive, will you permit me to lead you out ? ”

Leonora was touched to the quick by the desertion of Sir Alfred. A thought flashed across her mind : “ If I dance with Mr. Thorpe, whom he very well knows, it will perhaps pique him too, and he may then be vexed in his turn.” Leonora paused one moment ; she then gave her hand to Mr. Thorpe, and he led her away.

Thus do ungenerous passions creep into young hearts, and work their fearful way. “ Only this, and only that ; ” — “ just one step more ; ” — and just “ another,” to accomplish this or that purpose, till feet are impelled to the brink of a precipice ;

the mind is worked up to perplexity and distraction ; and the path of right, without most extraordinary exertion and repentance, is lost for ever.

Mr. Thorpe was unusually gay, and he cast more than one triumphant glance on the dancers of the other set. “ How fair Lydia is figuring away this evening ? ” said he, with a smile, to Leonora ; but Miss Clive made no reply. She was chagrined and sad ; and immediately that the quadrille was finished, she desired to be conducted to her aunt, and complaining of head-ache, the old lady most willingly took her leave. And thus finished this miserable evening, which Leonora expected to have enjoyed beyond any evening of her existence. Thus do expectations often fail ; and chiefly from the errors of those who seek for happiness by means which can never ensure it.

CHAP. XIII.

An industrious and virtuous education of children is a better inheritance for them than a great estate. "To what purpose is it," said Crates, "that you heap up great estates, and have no concern what manner of heirs you leave them to?"

PLUTARCH.

"DEAR brother," said Miss Palmerstone to Sir Alfred the next morning at breakfast, "as Lydia has a very bad head-ache, and wishes to stay quiet in her room, and we are alone, do forgive me if I ask you what you now think of a certain young lady? I gave you the note I promised, at your earnest wish: now do tell me, my dear brother, if you think such a woman calculated to make you happy?"

"It is a subject of deep importance, Helen," replied the Baronet. "Are you sure Miss Goldsmith sought her out, and was really recognised?"

"I am certain, quite certain," said Miss Palmerstone. "I sat, purposely, a little behind, that I might see all that was passing as soon as I found Miss Clive was in the room. I had not,

before, the smallest idea she was to be of the party; and I dare say she did not expect to see us there, and certainly not Lydia; because when we called twice at the Colonel's the ladies were out airing; and, at Lydia's particular request, her name was not left on my card."

"And why not?" enquired Sir Alfred. "Why not leave her name for her particular friend?"

"Because you know, brother, she has her little fancies; and, among others, she likes pleasing surprises. She has particularly dwelt upon the astonishment, and, she thought, pleasure, Miss Clive would express at seeing her actually in London for the first time in her life. She begged and entreated me not to disclose the secret. She should so enjoy, she said, the exclamations of the good Colonel, and the dear girls, when she should peep over my shoulder in paying the first visit at the town house."

Sir Alfred paused a little, and then said, "I think, sister, Miss Goldsmith was not becomingly dressed."

"I thought the same," replied the lady, "though, from my own peculiarities, I seldom study the effect of dress. The dress, however, was a very expensive one, and made a short time before she left the country. I dare say it was

there considered very rich and beautiful. The gold ornaments I advised her not to wear ; but she pleaded so powerfully for the bracelets, as being dear Miss Clive's gift ; the necklace, her father's ; the ear-rings, her brother's ; the brooch, dear mamma's ; in fact, she would write, she said, the day after the party, and tell her family, whom she dearly loves, that she had put on all their tokens of affection, at the first London party to which she had been. And, indeed, when she was dressed, she surveyed her ornaments with so much satisfaction, that it would have been cruel to make her take them off. There was not a thought of vanity, I am convinced, in the feeling. It originated purely in strong affection, and the simplicity of her heart."

" You are certainly right, sister, in not imputing the feeling of vanity to her," observed Sir Alfred : " as far as I can judge, she seems a stranger to it. A kind, simple-hearted, affectionate being, I dare say, she is ; but still, the world exacts from the best of characters some attention to the forms of taste and fashion. Few young persons like to attract notice, one would think, from the oddity or singularity of their dress. A modest, unassuming girl, like Miss Goldsmith, I should suppose would dress in a

quiet, lady-like manner, and not so as to draw general notice on herself. Were I her brother, I would take the liberty to tell her so."

"She is a good girl, and she would receive advice kindly, I am convinced," said Miss Palmerstone, "and I think I shall have a little conversation with her on the subject; but you know country ladies are not in the habit of seeing more style than their village or neighbourhood affords, and that is generally too glaring. I have often heard my dress-maker say, that she doubly trims the dresses which are to be sent into the country, or she could not hope to please her country customers."

"Is that true?" said the Baronet; "yet how very elegantly Miss Clive always dresses."

"She does so," replied his sister; "but recollect she came to London several times during Lady Elizabeth's life; and had, besides, the recollection of her mother's taste to guide her. Lady Elizabeth Clive was the most elegant woman in the Queen's retinue."

"So I have heard," replied Sir Alfred. "Her picture by Reynolds is most beautiful."

Here a long pause ensued. Miss Palmerstone looked earnestly at her brother. "Do you think her daughter like her?"

“ Yes ; — that is, I see a general resemblance. She is not quite so perfect in the shape of the face. Miss Clive’s hair is rather darker than her mother’s. There is a sweet, mild expression of endurance in the forehead of the picture, which the living beauty has not. Miss Clive’s is a broad ivory forehead, and her eye-brow and eye are perfect. Lady Elizabeth’s eye-brow is a fine projecting edge, like a carving in sculpture, yet stained in nature’s clearest brown ; majesty and sweetness sit on such a line of projection.”

“ She was, I understand, a very charming woman,” said Miss Palmerstone, “ but always indisposed ; indeed she never had a day’s health for many years before she died.”

“ Ah ! poor thing, that accounts for ——” Here Sir Alfred stopped. “ Helen, Helen,” pursued he, as he looked on the anxious countenance and swimming eyes of his sister, who was alarmed at the correctness of his description of Leonora’s features, and dreaded the effect upon his heart. “ Helen, she deserves, — she ought to be pitied. A suffering mother could not train up her child in the way she was to go : that child ought to be pitied.”

“ Pitied ! oh, yes,” replied Miss Palmerstone, clasping her hands with deep emotion ; “ but

never loved, I trust, by the noble heart of my dear, my valued brother."

Sir Alfred rose up: "You are incapable of meanness or ungenerous feelings, Helen. Your anxiety arises in your affection for me. Urge me no further on this point. Wait one week, and you shall hear my fixed determination. In the mean time, you have done all that a good sister could do. I thank you from my soul. More in you would be exceeding the rights of a sister and a woman; for, after all, my dear girl, man is a free agent; and I must be free to act on my own responsibility. I thank you, dearest Helen, from my very heart: but urge me no more." Saying this, Sir Alfred, much agitated, rose up, clasped his sister to his breast, and left her, bathed in tears, as she assured him that her lips should be closed upon the subject for ever.

Meantime the Colonel's inmates were moving on in their several spheres, with each a little world of hopes, and fears, and wishes, laid up in their respective bosoms. The Colonel, frank, easy, cheerful, and without a care; renewing many old acquaintances, which, for several years during his complete seclusion as a widower, he had of necessity dropped. The Viscountess resorting to her favourites for amusement, and to dispel the

remembrance of broken ties and disappointed hopes. She was seldom at home to the many persons who called to pay their respects; but in the Parks, airing in her own carriage, she was every fine day to be seen, about four o'clock. This kind-hearted lady, however, accepted every dinner or evening engagement of a superior order, on account of her niece; and, strange as it may seem to many of my young readers, her niece, with Miss Beresford and herself, were engaged to several balls for two months before they were to take place.

Mrs. Hammond, bereft of her only child, and seeing the deep contrition of Bell, gave all her anxiety and energy to the correction and instruction of that young lady; who, blessed with abilities not inferior to her sister's, made the most rapid and extraordinary exertions and improvement, to the inexpressible delight of this affectionate and fine-principled woman, and the joy of her amiable cousin.

Miss Beresford, diffusing happiness to every one within her reach, and appearing herself in the enjoyment of the same, yet looked pale and delicate, and to the searching and anxious eye of her valuable friend, she appeared not in her usual health. But as the young lady protested she

felt well, Mrs. Hammond increased the walks and drives in the vicinity of town, to give the advantage of change of air and exercise. Sir Edwin and Lady Beresford, too, were on their voyage home, and this, doubtless, caused an anxious fluttering in Fanny's heart.

And Leonora had her feelings; but of what nature were they? Could she be happy? Can the ungenerous, narrow-souled, envious, and proud be happy? Alas, no! Her young bosom was torn by a thousand conflicting emotions. "To have rejected her friend! it was unkind: but then to be deserted for Miss Goldsmith, the physician's daughter! A Clive, too! the granddaughter of an earl! Sir Alfred — was it to be believed? A man of elegance, refinement, taste, could he prefer the ill-dressed Lydia? What! did his attentions in the country mean nothing? Had she done aught that he should seem thus to alter his opinion? But suppose Lydia had been speaking unkindly of her to Sir Alfred? — to supplant her? — base girl, she had;" but I may be revenged even now," cried she, as she rose up, and paced to and fro in her dressing-room. "And that simpleton Thorpe, too, perplexing one? Alas, alas! he is no more to be compared to the other than the noble lion can be to the

ass ! What shall I do ? My cousin I cannot speak to, for though I like not Thorpe, he shall not be at liberty to turn from me at present, either, and bear his disgrace so lightly. Provoking accidents ! How did that tormenting girl get to London, as if only to be my plague and vexation !” Hereupon she burst into a passion of tears ; but presently recollecting that she was going out with Miss Sydenham in an hour or two, she went to the china-stand, and bathed her eyes in cold water, to obliterate the effects of her various distresses.

The Lord Chamberlain of England at length put forth a notice, by command of Her Majesty, that the Queen would hold a drawing-room on the Thursday following, in her Palace of Buckingham House. What a sensation did this notice create ! In addition to the bustle and interest of a drawing-room, the lovely and interesting Princess Charlotte, the Regent’s only daughter, was to appear as a bride ! Nothing could exceed the anxiety manifested by all ranks on this memorable occasion. The people seemed wild with joy ; and the nobility and gentry deeply partook of the same enthusiastic feelings. The union was so satisfactory to the British nation, that hopes were raised to the highest pitch, and

the public mind was every where in the most tumultuous state of excitement. Nothing was spoken of but the royal wedding ; the beauty and virtues of the youthful couple ; and the admirable manner in which they demeaned themselves to every class of society. The eagerness of the nobility and gentry to attend this drawing-room was unparalleled ; and it may well be supposed, that Miss Clive and her cousin partook of the general anxiety. The dresses, according to the Colonel's particular order, were exactly alike, and the young ladies would have appeared as sisters in their outward arrangements, had not Leonora declared she would wear her mother's brilliants on her head and throat ; whilst Miss Beresford had only the pearls given her by her good mother on the day she had completed her seventeenth year, a twelvemonth before that time. Lady Royston had a richly embroidered satin train by her, and the petticoat she left to the taste of her robe-maker. " It must be an important occasion," the old lady observed, with a tear in her eye, " which could thus draw an old woman from her retirement to such a crowd ; to present her niece, or nieces, she might say ; for Miss Beresford deserved to be loved as one ; and to join among Her Majesty's faithful servants to offer her dutiful

respects upon that sweet Princess's marriage." So said, on this subject, many an aged peer and peeress, and many a loyal commoner of England ; for never since Charlotte of England had held a court had any been recorded as more magnificent or fuller than this.

But before the eventful Thursday the young ladies were surprised and gratified by two visits from Sir Alfred. He called one morning in his way from Bagshot Park, whither he had been on horseback to call on the Duke of Gloucester. The second visit was made as he came from the Prince Regent's levee ; Colonel Clive having met him at Carlton Palace, and afterwards in the extreme press and embarrassment of so many hundred carriages as were seen at this most splendid court in honour of the royal wedding, offered to set him down. The Colonel, still a good-looking man, not really aged by time, but chiefly from the effects of some few hard campaigns, set off the regimentals which he still wore ; and the numerous foreign and British honours sparkling on his manly breast gave him an interest in the eye of every beholder. Sir Alfred was attired as a gentleman of England. His fine hair requiring no heated iron to give the desired wave ; his tall and rather slight figure set

off by a rich but not gaudy embroidered dress with diamond buttons ; and his diamond-hilted sword, the heir-loom of the Palmerstones, borne with perfect ease and grace by his side. As was and is the fashion at court, a black silk bag hung behind over his shoulders ; his hat was three-cornered, and the ruffles of his wrists and neck were of the finest point lace. His features, that beamed with intelligence, honour, truth, and love of king and country, were more than usually animated from the scene Sir Alfred had just quitted ; and Leonora sighed and thought she had never enough valued the good opinion of this gentleman, as he conversed on the leading and most interesting topics : — the Prince Regent, the Royal Dukes, Prince Leopold, the enthusiasm of the people, and the satisfaction that pervaded every countenance. His discourse was chiefly addressed to the Viscountess ; but from time to time he appealed to the young ladies, but most often to Bell, who happened to be in the drawing-room when her father entered, and received his affectionate salute on her forehead. In half an hour, as one of the Baronet's servants had apprised the coachman, Sir Alfred's carriage was announced, and he took his leave.

Mr. Thorpe, too, called the morning after the

levee: the servant threw open the door, and announced him.

“ Mr. What ? ” asked Lady Royston.

“ Mr. Thorpe, my Lady.”

“ Thorpe, Thorpe,” muttered the Viscountess, turning to her niece; “ what! the young man I disliked so much in the country ? ”

Leonora drew up her head. “ He called on us, there, madam.”

“ Aye, aye, I recollect; and a very disagreeable person I thought him. I shall go to my room.”

She accordingly left the saloon by one door, as the young man entered it by the other.

“ Ah, ah, my lady, I heard your silks rustle,” said Mr. Thorpe, as he entered before the Viscountess had quite escaped.

Leonora looked down to hide a smile. Alas! she did smile; and this frivolous and satirical young man was not slow in noticing and improving upon his joke. Age, dignity, worth, goodness, talent, or virtues, were equally unheeded by him, when he could produce any point to turn into ridicule; and, to the disgrace of many young ladies be it said, he was often joined in the laugh by those who nevertheless despised him; and almost blushed afterwards at the license to repeat

his follies, which their tacit or acknowledged acquiescence had given him.

"Having spoken of my lady," resumed he, "how is her lap-dog, her parrot, her monkey,—her footman, her soubrette, her dunkey;—pronouncing the word donkey, as I must do, to make it rhyme properly—ha! ha! ha!"

Leonora laughed. "How very absurd you are!" said she.

"Ah ça," continued he, "Belle Léonore, 'Le badinage vaut bien les soucis,' as my old French tutor, reverend, and defunct, used to say."

"Yes," might Belle Léonore have answered, "Jokes and smiles are very well, and gaiety is a charm of youth; but sacred, or venerable, or respectable things, and persons, should never be admitted into our jokes, or made subjects of satirical remarks, which are always more or less tinged by malevolence and ill-nature."

"But I have, by some extraordinary good luck, caught you alone. You remember my words the other day," continued the young gentleman.

"I remember nothing about them," returned Leonora, stooping to pick up the newspaper, which she intentionally pushed off the little table near which she was sitting.

“ Now that is nonsense, Belle Léonore,” replied he ; “ you certainly do remember : you are, without exception, the finest young lady I ever saw, and I should be proud to see the old family jewels on such a person, and to give you my six letters of name instead of your five.”

“ Oh, how very ridiculous !” said Leonora.

“ But it is not ridiculous,” continued Mr. Thorpe. “ You shall have the most elegant equipage in London ; your settlements shall make half the women envy you ; and your establishment in town and country shall be as magnificent as those of the Prince and Princess of Coburg. So now, Belle Léonore, will you, will you, for better and worse——”

Miss Clive’s honourable feelings at length prevailed ; she felt she ought to speak, and decidedly ; — and she was going to do so, when the door opened, and Miss Beresford advanced. She started when she saw Mr. Thorpe with her cousin, and witnessed the embarrassment of both.

Fanny slightly bowed, and with a feeling of delicacy would instantly have retired. But reflecting again, that *he* certainly was not the person who could lay any claim to a preference in Leonora’s bosom, she hesitated, and at length

finished by the trite remark, "that it was a fine day."

Mr. Thorpe looked at his boots, hemmed, pulled up his collar, and acquiesced, by the word, "Very — very fine."

Miss Clive took a glance at her cousin's ingenuous, perplexed countenance. "She is jealous," thought she; "I will keep her on the *qui vive*, for some little time, at any rate." She thereupon turned to Mr. Thorpe; and he having at length resumed his self-possession, which, indeed, he had lost but for a moment, he fell into his ordinary style of insipid or satirical conversation, till some other visitors came, when he took his leave.

CHAP. XIV.

We have a great work in our hands : the Gospel-promises to believe ; the commands to obey ; temptations to resist ; passions to conquer ; and this must be done, or we are undone.

THE eventful Thursday at length arrived. As early as ten o'clock in the morning, all the foot-paths about Buckingham House were crowded with spectators, whilst the great hall and windows of the Palace were filled by those persons who were so fortunate as to have obtained tickets. In this number were Mrs. Hammond and Bell ; the former having superintended the young ladies' dressing, previous to her departure from home.

The dress-maker also presided, — anxious for the honour of her name and desirous that the two young ladies should have every advantage that taste and experience could bestow. Leonora surveyed herself in the vast mirrors of the saloons, and she thought there could be nothing wanting. Miss Beresford also desired that

her appearance should be as faultless as she could make it, and that which her mamma would approve of.

Leonora certainly looked beautiful; and Lady Royston thought so, as, with a feeling of pride and affection, the old lady bustled in her point and embroidery, satins, and emerald tiara, which nearly encircled her head, and leaning forward, kissed her. "And you, too, my pretty Fanny," said the old lady, seizing the smiling girl by the hand; "you look very well, — indeed, vastly well, my dear, and handsome too; aye, notwithstanding your modesty and your blushes. Let me see; why, you look taller now you are dressed in your hoop; you are positively nearly as tall as Leonora. Come here, niece."

Leonora drew closer.

"No doubt, Leonora is only taller by an inch," said Colonel Clive, who stood by; and she is as good a girl as will be at court this day, I'll warrant. And finer or better girls than these two will never bend to kiss the hand of majesty." Saying this, the kind uncle, the fond father, saluted the cheeks of the blooming girls, and then hastened to enquire why the carriage drew not up to the door.

"We can't, sir," said one of the footmen, in his state-livery, of sky-blue and silver, richly em-

broidered: "these post-boys say they will draw up, and our coachman said he would not move for them; so there has been a sort of a scuffle, and the post-boys have conquered; and here come the visitors, sir."

The young ladies, on hearing the bustle, went to the window.

Fanny looked earnestly at the armorial bearings on the carriage, and clasping her hands, exclaimed, "Oh, my mamma, my dearest papa!" In two moments, they were in the drawing-room, folding their beloved daughter to their hearts. Colonel Clive embraced his sister most affectionately, and received the ardent and grateful thanks of both parents, for his great attention and kindness to their child. Hearty salutations also passed between the couple and Lady Royston, and a mother's eyes beamed with gratitude to the kind old lady for her extended patronage to Fanny. Leonora was embraced, and praised for her appearance and improvement.

"How unfortunate is this court-day!" exclaimed the Colonel.

"I need not go, dear mamma; do permit me to stay at home," said Fanny, her eyes full of tears of joy.

"No, my dearest girl," said her mother. "Such

opportunities are rare ; do not miss this one. You will not be detained long, and we shall have hours and days to ask and answer a thousand questions after such an absence. I long to see dear Mrs. Hammond, and shall count the minutes till you all return. Now, farewell, my sweet Fanny. Dear brother, don't keep the carriage waiting : — you will be late, I fear."

The party hastily tripped away ; and Sir Edwin, greatly improved in health and strength, offered his arm to the Viscountess, and led her to the carriage : the three footmen mounted behind, and the party drove off at full speed.

The company had begun to assemble at Buckingham House at twelve o'clock, and continued to do so till past four. The Princess Charlotte and her noble husband went in state, escorted by Life Guards, and preceded by three carriages, containing their suite. Colonel Clive's carriage drew up immediately after the royal party, followed them, and found the Queen and Princesses in the drawing-room, which they had entered precisely at two. The presentations and congratulations of the nobility and gentry immediately commenced ; and were received by Queen Charlotte with the affability and dignity which marked every action of that virtuous and exem-

plary Queen. Lady Royston was immediately recognised, and particularly noticed; for Her Majesty delighted to see the best and wisest of the nobility at her court, and loved to encourage sound sense and merit, wherever they could be found.

“I have brought my niece and her cousin to pay their duty to Your Majesty, and to offer their humble congratulations,” said the Viscountess.

The Lord Chamberlain passed the card: it was read, and thrown down immediately behind the Princesses Augusta and Sophia, as the clerk of the ceremonies called out the names of both young ladies. The Queen smiled most graciously, as she gave her hand, — that royal and maternal hand which had caressed thirteen lovely children, and which now trembled with the inroads of age; yet would she not be seated during this most fatiguing ceremony, and even waited till every lady had passed before she retired.

The company moved from the Queen to the Prince and Princess of Coburg, who stood on the right of Her Majesty, the Princess repeating her happiness to every enquirer.* Numbers then went forward to other apartments, and thence to the court-yard of the Palace, and the grass-plot,

* Historical.

which gave the scene the appearance of a splendid fête or gala, as it was impossible for any empty carriage to draw up for any personage till the company were all set down. Indeed, so numerous were they, that it is calculated near three thousand persons were present. So vast and magnificent a throng parading the open air, and filling the Palace windows in full costume; jewels glittering, and plumes waving, with bands of music enlivening the scene, gave to the whole an appearance of enchantment. Leonora was delighted; Fanny, flushed with exhilaration and recent joy, showed a countenance lighted up with hope, rapture, and happiness. Lord Sydenham presently came up and spoke to Lady Royston, who leaned on the arm of her niece. Fanny was with the Colonel, at a little distance. They were suddenly accosted by Sir Alfred Palmerstone, who shook the Colonel by the hand, and then moved to the other side. "Miss Beresford," said he, and bowed, "you ought always to be in your court-dress, for I never saw you look so blooming."

"I may, indeed, look happy to-day," replied Fanny, smiling: "my mamma and papa are returned, Sir Alfred."

"Indeed!" replied he: "I am rejoiced, for your sake and for mine, dear Miss Beresford,"

added he in a low tone, as he observed the Colonel stopping to speak to the young Earl of March, now the noble Duke of Richmond, who had lately returned from his regiment abroad.

“Will you permit me to wait on Sir Edwin, your father? I have only stayed till this day to make known my sentiments towards you, and my sincere esteem and respect for your estimable character. I am convinced my happiness might be deposited with safety in your hands, if you could be persuaded to trust me with your own.”

It is impossible to describe Fanny's surprise on hearing these words pronounced in a hurried tone. She was for several moments unable to answer. At length she replied, “I know not what to say; I am so astonished. — I am sure you are incapable of such a jest: but yet, sir, my cousin Leonora? — I could not be mistaken ——”

“It is what I expected from you,” said he, “generous and noble-minded girl. But I have had a letter written several days in my pocket, ready for this opportunity. I will not offend your delicacy by offering it to you now; but I will send it to your house.” The Colonel now returned. Fanny passed her trembling hand through his arm, and he began to make some pleasant remarks on the scene before them, till

at length his name was echoed from yeoman to yeoman, and "Colonel Clive's carriage stops the way" almost deafened him, till he and the ladies were fairly in it. Sir Alfred having handed in Miss Beresford, and bowed respectfully to Miss Clive and her aunt, fell back in the crowd, and immediately disappeared.

Lady Royston, always pleased with the Baronet, smiled very graciously: but Leonora turned as white as the blonde lace she wore; and then her colour varied as the hues reflected round her neck from the largest diamonds that any young unmarried lady had ventured to wear that day. The Colonel saw nothing of all this, so engaged was he with the dense multitudes of human beings they had to drive among. Fanny's heart throbbed, as if it would have beaten through her bodice; and the fair round pearls on her snowy neck were scarcely more tinged with carnation than her cheek, at the scene of the last ten minutes. But the carriage soon wheeled the party home, and the kind Lady Royston saw her own come up immediately after, with Mrs. Hammond and Bell, to whom she had insisted on lending it. They had left the Palace, and walked to a little distance, where they were so fortunate as to discover it, and drove off.

And now a merry party and greeting appeared in the saloon; but the two girls were supposed to be a little overcome by agitation and the heat of the drawing-room. A collation was, in half an hour, served up, and a glass of wine was administered to each. Fanny, thankful for the offer, drank some sherry, and felt strengthened. Leonora, at the tender entreaty of Lady Beresford, raised hers, when one of the Colonel's servants entered with a letter on a salver, and delivered it, as it was addressed, to Miss Beresford.

"Who brought it?" said Miss Clive, in a low hurried tone.

"Sir Alfred Palmerstone's butler, ma'am," answered the man: "he is not waiting."

Leonora recollected herself, and in a moment replied, "Oh, very well; it is all right, I dare say;" and then, with extraordinary quickness, added, "Did the opera tickets arrive whilst we were out?"

"They did, ma'am," replied the man. "Ebers sent them;" and he took a little packet from a side table, and handed it.

Leonora broke the seal, and thus, by a dexterous thought, escaped the scrutiny of every one but Mrs. Hammond, who saw the whole trans-

action, and standing near the servant heard all. Lady Beresford's maternal vigilance was directed to her beloved daughter, who, with a trembling hand, dropped the letter into her silk-bag and drew the strings; her knees knocking together, her throat parched up, and her eye turned here and there, as if for a place to rest on.

"So, so, my little Fanny, a love-letter, eh?" cried out the Colonel.

"A letter, Sir," said Fanny; "but the contents may not be altogether for me: will you excuse me for a moment?"

"Oh, surely, surely. Certainly, my little Fanny," continued he, patting her arm, as she passed him.

On leaving the room she flew to her own, and almost breathless with agitation, opened the seal, and read as follows:—

"My dear Miss Beresford,

"I have for several days been deeply anxious to unburden my heart to you; but I have waited the arrival of your mamma and Sir Edwin; because, as an affectionate and excellent daughter should do, I am persuaded you will give me no reply, even if I can prevail upon you to give me

hopes, until you have communicated and advised with the best and most disinterested of friends on so important a subject.

“ You will be surprised to hear from me how fully I have had the opportunity of studying your artless, ingenuous, and noble character. I see it free from envy, guile, coquetry, detraction, and the habit of reviling at superiors, or characters whose failings ought to be tenderly treated by us, and indeed are almost too sacred to be revealed to our nearest relatives. You will read and wonder, for I saw you when you saw not me; further explanation will distress you; I will endeavour to be brief. I was struck with the accomplishments, beauty, grace, and elegance of Leonora; but, happily for me, I have seen a note directed by her to my sister, instead of to Miss Goldsmith. I was reading a newspaper in a florist’s shop in Wigmore Street, whilst my sister and this Miss Goldsmith were up-stairs trying on millinery. I met Miss Clive at a party where the friend of her youth was despised; and I feel that the beautiful Leonora is no more to me than the marble statue of Hebe by Canova; and here this part of my subject rests for ever, — for you will fully understand these allusions.

“ I turn to a brighter theme. Dearest Miss

Beresford, with the deepest respect and esteem for your most amiable character, and the sincerest regard for you personally, may I be allowed to hope for that permission to address your beloved parents for their interest in and consent to an union which will crown the felicity of your devoted and faithful servant,

“ALFRED PALMERSTONE.”

Fanny dropped the letter from her hand, and buried her face in her cambric handkerchief. “Oh, Leonora, Leonora, what a noble heart, what a kind devoted heart, have you lost!” said she, in her extreme emotion. At this instant Miss Clive entered.

“Come, Fanny,” exclaimed she, with a hurried accent: “what are you doing? I have come to fetch you?”

Fanny hastily caught up the letter. “What!” continued Leonora, “not read your letter yet? Who is it from?”

“Dear cousin,” replied Fanny, “don’t ask me.”

“Not ask you?” returned Miss Clive, endeavouring to force a smile: “nonsense; is it from Sir Alfred himself, or his sister?”

“Oh, Leonora,” said Fanny, throwing her

arms round her cousin's neck, "do not distress me so. It is——"

"What! from the Baronet?" exclaimed Leonora: "pray let me read it."

"Oh, no, no, cousin, I cannot, indeed."

"Nonsense!" said Miss Clive, in extreme agitation. "I must absolutely see it: you never refused to show me a letter before." Saying this, she dexterously jerked the letter from Fanny, and instantly began reading it, whilst Miss Beresford burst into tears, and withdrew to the dressing-room. In five minutes, Miss Clive followed her, and carelessly dropping the letter into her lap, said, "I guessed there might be somewhat of me in the correspondence, and it seems there is. I am amazingly obliged to Sir Alfred: his civilities are boundless, and of course indescribable. I wish you, my Lady, every happiness with so true, so faithful, so constant, and so remarkably charitable a lover and husband?"

Saying this, Miss Clive, with a sarcastic smile, turned away, hastily dried a tear of burning shame and vexation, swallowed a glass of water, and returned alone to the drawing-room.

Seeing her return without her child, Lady Beresford quickly rose, and went to seek her. Fanny was cheered with the sight of her mother,

and, on being questioned, threw herself into her parent's arms, and mentioned the wishes of Sir Alfred, entreating her mother's permission to destroy the letter. "You have, doubtless, a good reason for this request, Fanny," said the Lady; "for I never found you capricious; act, therefore, in every respect as you wish; and if you desire my consent and your father's, you are sure of it from both. We know, and sincerely esteem Sir Alfred worthy of our treasure. So cheer up, my dearest child, and compose yourself. Bathe those red eyes in a little water, and return with me. I presume, by your agitation, my love, you do not wish us to discourage Sir Alfred? I need not tell you it is an important step, my dear girl, and to do just as you feel inclined; and remember your father and I are in no haste to part with our only daughter."

"Dearest mamma," said Fanny, kissing her mother's cheek.

"You do not object, then, to Sir Alfred?" asked Lady Beresford.

"Oh, mamma," replied Fanny, hiding her face on her mother's shoulder, "he is so kind; his character is so estimable; I have heard his principles are so excellent."

"It is enough, my sweet girl. I can guess the

rest. May God of his infinite mercy bless your choice, my beloved child. Your father shall write this very evening to Sir Alfred. Come, let us return to the family."

Miss Beresford followed her mamma, who, with as much composure as she could assume, (and, indeed, it is a trial to a fond parent to give away all rights and privileges to the exclusive society of a justly beloved child,) returned to her seat, making a slight apology for Fanny.

"Nonsense, sister," said the Colonel; "never mind apologising. The dear girl has had the question put, and she has now only to say, Yes, or No. I think it will be Yes, by her blushes; and, indeed, Palmerstone is a very good fellow."

Fanny, hereupon, looked so distressed, that Lady Beresford feared she would be ill; and putting her hand on the Colonel's arm, said, "Dear brother, have mercy."

"Who, I?" replied the Colonel, "why, I would not vex or worry the dear girl for the world."

"I am sure of it," answered Lady Beresford; "and now let us talk about the court. What did Lord March say, and where is the Duke, his father?"

This question turned the conversation. But

Mrs. Hammond, indeed every one at table, was fully aware how matters stood; and joy danced in the eyes of all who best loved Fanny, and also knew the gentleman, who, it appeared, now sought her hand. Bell turned her eyes with anxiety and affection on her sister; but seeing her more smiling than usual, was satisfied, and taking an opportunity slid up to her cousin, and pressing her hand, kissed her. Fanny, deeply sensible of this gentle kindness, warmly returned the pressure of her hand, and said, "Dear Bell, I hope you were gratified by the sight this morning?"

"Yes," said Bell, "it was very grand; but they pushed me about so much, and we were driven among the fine ladies and gentlemen; and when Mrs. Hammond very civilly said to one of the yeomen, or jolly beef-eaters, who were calling up the carriages, and names, 'Will you be so good as to call up Lady Royston's carriage?' he shook his jolly head, and replied, 'No, ma'am; I am not here to wait upon any but Her Majesty's visitors*:' so we squeezed through as well as we could, and came up with the carriage at a little distance. I saw the Queen quite distinctly: she came close to where we stood: such an old little woman, and so slight, looking very pleased and

* A fact.

happy. She walked first with the Princess Elizabeth, and as she passed us her swansdown-tippet fell off: half-a-dozen ladies stooped to pick it up. She courtesied, and smiled very pleasantly when it was placed on her shoulders again. The other princesses and ladies followed her, and they retired about four o'clock."

Colonel Clive here interrupted his daughter by sundry questions, all of which Bell, who was in excellent spirits, answered with great correctness; for she had an excellent memory, and described with great vivacity any thing she had seen. She was just beginning to describe the appearance of the noble and majestic Prince Regent, afterwards the magnificent and excellent King of England, when the party was interrupted by several visitors in their court-dresses; and soon after they left, the dinner, which was an early one, was announced.

As some of the family were going to the splendid opera in their full dress, they soon left the dinner-table, and coffee was ordered. A carriage drove up, and a gentleman, apologising for the hour, requested to be shown into Colonel Clive's library, and to see that gentleman. The Colonel immediately went to him; the door was shut; the conversation lasted half an hour. The

gentleman, who was in a court-dress, then took his leave, returned to his carriage, two servants in magnificent liveries got up behind, and he drove off.

In a few minutes the Colonel entered the drawing-room, and went up straight to Leonora, who was hurrying over the affair of the tea-table, at which Bell presided, in haste to set off to the most brilliant opera of the season.

“ Ah, ah, Leonora,” said he, and then looked round : “ well, we are only a family party, so it does not matter. Well, girls, two offers in one day ? ”

“ What do you mean, papa ? ” said Leonora, turning pale and red.

“ Mean ? you little rogue,” asked he ; “ why, you know very well. He says he has the very bit of myrtle you gave him as a keepsake some weeks ago.”

“ I, sir ! ” said Leonora, in amazement.

“ Aye, you, my little sly one ; and he says you accepted him a week ago. So I had but little to say on the subject, only to wish him joy : my consent was almost a matter of form. Why, I believe there is some expectation of a peerage in the family, and he is the only surviving branch in it.”

“ Who do you mean, nephew ? ” said Lady Royston.

“ I mean Mr. Thorpe, madam : a good-looking fellow, of twenty-five thousand a year ; ten thousand of which he will settle on Leonora as a yearly income, if she survives him.”

“ Mr. Thorpe ! — Humph ! ” said Lady Royston, with a flirt of her foot, which sent her little dog yelping across the rug. The dog was to be pacified. Leonora, strangely confused, attempted to deny.

“ Nonsense, my dear,” said her father : “ would you have given a man a keep-sake, or have let him have a flower you were wearing, if you had not wished to show some preference ? and when he proposed to you a week ago, would you not have avoided, instead of dancing with him on the same day ? no, no ; honour, my dear girl ; your honour is concerned. You certainly stand engaged ; and I wish you all joy, my dear, as I wished to my little Fanny, there, this morning. And now, my dear friends, I will tell you all a secret. As Leonora is going to be married, I see no reason why my pretty Bell and I should object to make interest with Goldsmith’s excellent daughter, to come and live with us. I offered my hand to dear Lydia a year ago ; and she refused me, as she said she would never step in the place of her friend Leonora ; this plea she will not now

have ; and I hope my little Bell will be not the less happy for such a step-mother."

To describe the astonishment of all parties, at this *dénouement* would be impossible. Leonora began to think of her jointure ;—ten thousand a year—the peerage in prospect—the family jewels ; and, finally, she reflected, that she had gone too far, in her father's eyes, to retract. At the opera she met Mr. Thorpe, and her consent to be the wife of a man she despised, was given.

The Colonel drove off to find Miss Goldsmith, from whom, and from Miss Palmerstone, a note of congratulation had come that evening, written to Fanny, immediately after her father's acquiescence to Sir Alfred's proposals arrived. Fanny passed the evening with her mother. Lady Royston, in a sad ill humour, accompanied Leonora to the opera.

The day after the drawing-room was held the newspapers were filled with descriptions of the ladies' dresses, and a list of the numerous presentations. Among them were the following :—

Presentations.

Miss Clive, by her aunt, Viscountess Royston.

Miss Beresford, by Viscountess Royston.

Miss Palmerstone ; by the Duchess of Leeds. Sir Alfred Palmerstone was presented to Her Majesty, on his return from abroad.

Ladies' Dresses.

Viscountess Royston.—Rich green brocaded silk petticoat, edged with a magnificent border of green chenille, and real emeralds ; train to correspond ; stomacher of emeralds à la Seigné ; head-dress, tiara of emeralds and brilliants, with plume of ostrich feathers ; rich point lappets ; ear-rings and necklace, emeralds and diamonds, of the finest water.

Her Ladyship's dress had a most magnificent effect.

Miss Clive.—The beautiful daughter of the late Lady Elizabeth, formerly one of Her Majesty's ladies in waiting, was attired in a most elegant and tasteful robe of delicate blonde lace, with a very deep border, embroidered in white chenille and the finest Roman pearls ; train, a rich French white satin *fleur-de-lis*, with border to correspond. The body of this most unique dress was made rather long, and to fit tight to the shape, with a pointed stomacher. A deep garniture of beautiful blonde lace fell negligently round the bosom,

caught here and there by a single diamond of great value. Lappets of blonde ; necklace and ear-rings of the most costly brilliants ; head-dress, a demi-coronet of brilliants and ostrich feathers ; natural bouquet of lilies of the valley, and double violets, at the left side.

This dress and the following one attracted the attention of every lady at the drawing-room.

Miss Beresford.—This graceful and lovely young lady wore a dress exactly similar to the foregoing one ; excepting that her ornaments were the finest oriental pearls ; necklace, comb, ear-rings, and brooches, *en suite* ; bouquet on the left side, as above.

Miss Palmerstone.—Lilac gauze over a white satin petticoat ; lilac satin train ; head dress, a plume of feathers.

This lady looked extremely handsome, without ornaments of any kind whatever.

Two days afterwards, a morning paper contained this paragraph :—

“ No fewer than three marriages are talked of in a certain gallant Colonel’s family. Sir A——P—— is to be united to the lovely daughter of an Irish baronet, who is just returned from Lisbon. The beautiful and elegant Miss C—— to the young and wealthy Fitzherbert T——,

Esq., of Leicestershire Abbey; and the noble Colonel himself will lead the amiable Miss G——, eldest daughter of the celebrated physician, to the altar. The former two young ladies were among the most striking and elegant of the recent presentations to Her Majesty."

"How absurd!" said the Viscountess, knitting her brows. "Where can the people pick up these things?"

"From the servants, of course," said the happy Colonel. "But never mind, my Lady, they are pretty correct, as the events will prove."

"Well, nephew, my presence will soon be useless," replied Lady Royston. "I shall return to my country seat again."

"Dear madam, do not be in haste," said the Colonel. "Lydia and I will give you a hearty welcome at Clive."

"No doubt, no doubt, nephew," replied the Lady, with a deep sigh. "Dear, dear, this is an uncertain world!"

"Do not be down-hearted, madam," said the Colonel.

"Ah, me!" replied the Lady: "is it not throwing her away?"

"Who?" asked the Colonel.

"Why, Leonora!" said she

“Nay, Madam,” replied he; “she is going to have the man of her choice: there is no compulsion used.”

“True, nephew, true,” said the Lady, and again sighed.

In one month the three marriages were solemnised in St. George’s Church, Hanover Square. Bell insisted on acting the part of bride’s maid to Miss Goldsmith, to show her generous assent to the connection. The timid Lydia was deeply grateful for this kindness, and at her own earnest desire was married the last. Leonora, in the most magnificent dress, was first led to the altar. Mr. Thorpe then took leave of the parties, and the “happy” couple drove off in a new carriage and four to Lord Cromwell’s seat in Essex. Alas! they were called a happy couple: but of the whole party, only one couple was really so, — Sir Alfred and Lady Palmerstone, who were united to each other by principle, taste, sentiment, birth, education, rank, and fortune. The excellent Lydia made a domestic, affectionate, gentle partner; but she feared as well as loved the Colonel, who was old enough to be her father. Fanny was the wife, friend, companion, adviser, the life, the joy, the pride, the happiness of her husband. Leonora was the wife of Mr. Thorpe;

but the affections which she could not bestow before marriage she never gave afterwards. And as she had cherished unamiable, narrow, selfish sentiments when young, so, in the midst of splendour, magnificence, gaieties, and fashion, Leonora more beautiful by time, and as it appeared to some the most enviable of women, was nevertheless the most haughty, capricious, and satirical of the leaders of ton. Yet there were times when Leonora would sigh and weep, and weep and sigh, as if her heart would break. Conscience would then be heard; and often, when she unloaded her hair of its splendid ornaments, she would dismiss her women, lean her head on her fair-jewelled hand, and shedding bitter tears, would say, "Alas, alas! Do my riches make me happy? Is there any one on earth who really loves me? Oh, that I had been like Fanny Palmerstone in my early days! Or that I could now wear an unclouded brow like her! Alas, alas! had I not neglected the culture of my heart when young, I might now be as amiable as my repentant sister, and as happy as my justly admired cousin!"

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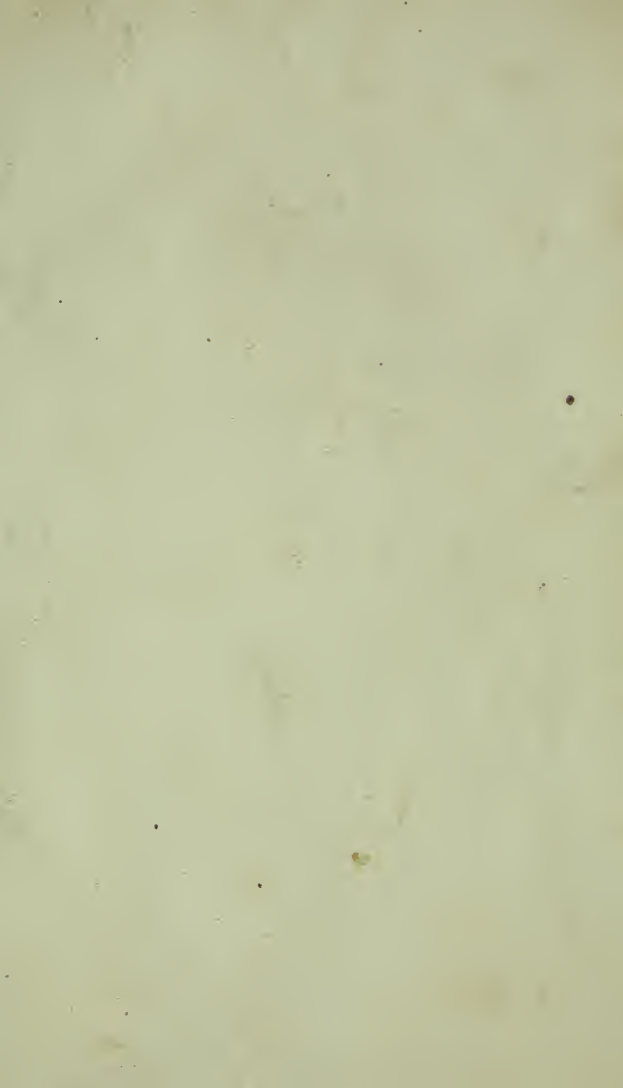
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